

BIG ADVENTURES,
TINY PHOTOS
HOW TO CASH IN
ON INSTAGRAM

CAN SYLVIA EARLE
SAVE THE OCEANS?
BY IAN FRAZIER

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BRAIN (GET SMARTER
AND FITTER AT ONCE)

Outside

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ESCAPES
+ The 2016
Ski and
Snowboard
REPORT

The 365-Day Bucket List

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46 Ideas.
Guaranteed
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#37
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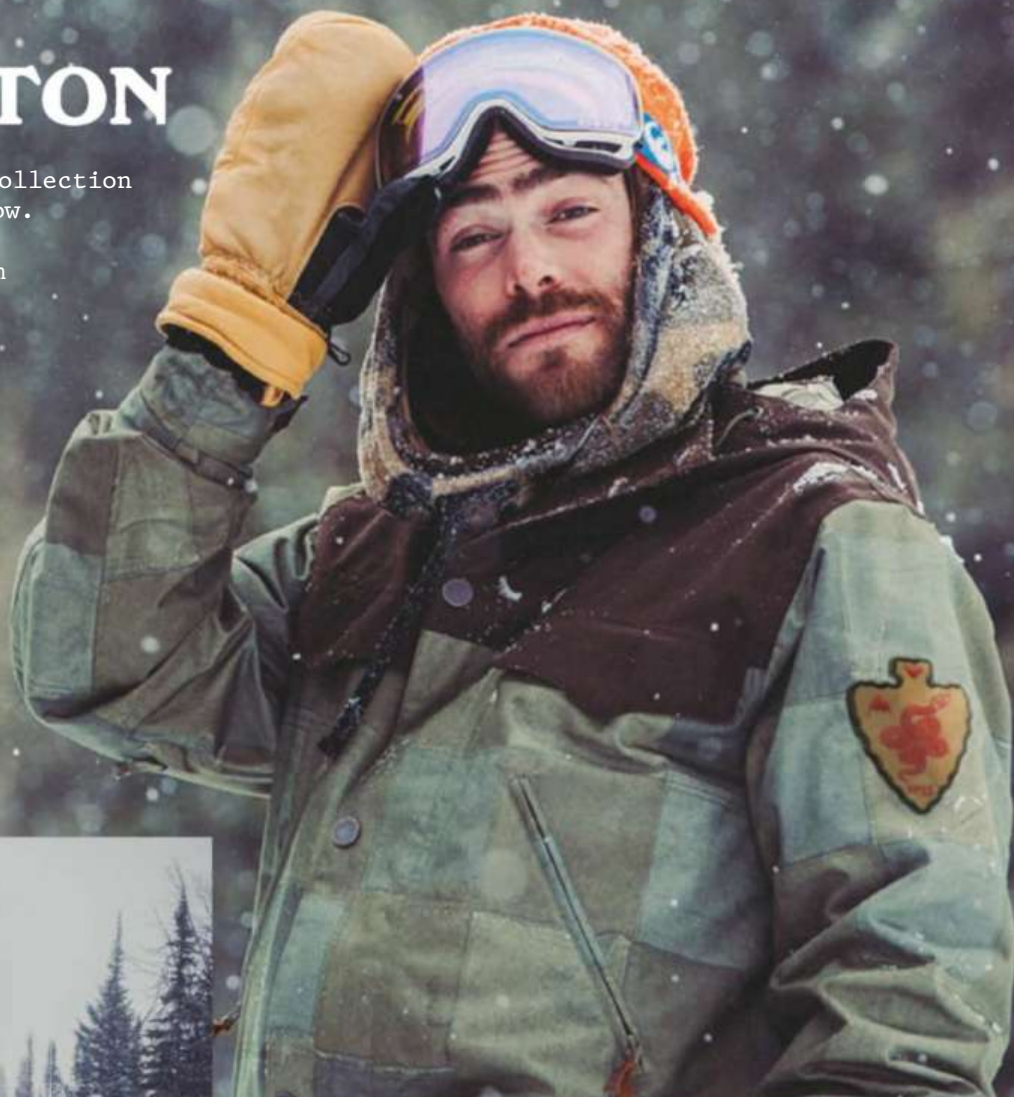
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62 *THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT*

Our 2015 Life List is a user's manual for all the travel, fun, and affiliated delights you can cram into a year, from rocketing down an Olympic bobsled run to sleeping atop a giant fir tree. Plus: shark-defying surfer Mick Fanning shares his philosophy of living large by embracing risk. BY KATE SIBER

76 *PICS OR IT DIDN'T HAPPEN*

Social-media sites like Instagram give top adventurers huge new audiences that companies are eager to reach. GRAYSON SCHAFFER tags along on a backcountry ski trip in Alberta, where a morning huck becomes an afternoon upload that hits screens all over the world.

82 *THE GREATEST BOAT RACE EVER DREAMED UP OVER BEERS*

It seemed like a pretty good idea at the time: \$10,000 to the first crew who can coax a nonmotorized vessel from Port Townsend, Washington, to Ketchikan, Alaska, through 750 turbulent miles of British Columbia's Inside Passage. Yacht racing was never like this. BY ABE STREEP

92 *EARLE POWER*

Our correspondent goes deep with Sylvia Earle, a legendary scientist whose career of exploration, advocacy, and engineering has opened millions of minds to the threats facing our overfished and polluted seas. The man-made pressures never let up. Fortunately, neither does she. BY IAN FRAZIER





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11.15

32 DISPATCHES

First Look: Skateboarding's next superstar is six-year-old Fox Rio.

Primer: The newest tool in avalanche control? Bomb-carrying drones.

Business: A comfy shell that could revolutionize the apparel industry.

Media: Jonathan Franklin's thrilling new book *438 Days*, about Salvador Alvarenga's time spent lost at sea.

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Central America: Great trips in one of the hemisphere's hottest travel regions.

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plus

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TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED THAN THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED.

YETI COOLERS ARE BUILT TO BE INDESTRUCTIBLE AND KEEP ICE FOR DAYS.
BUILT FOR THOSE WHO SEEK OUT NOWHERE. BUILT FOR HOMES WITH FOUR WHEELS.
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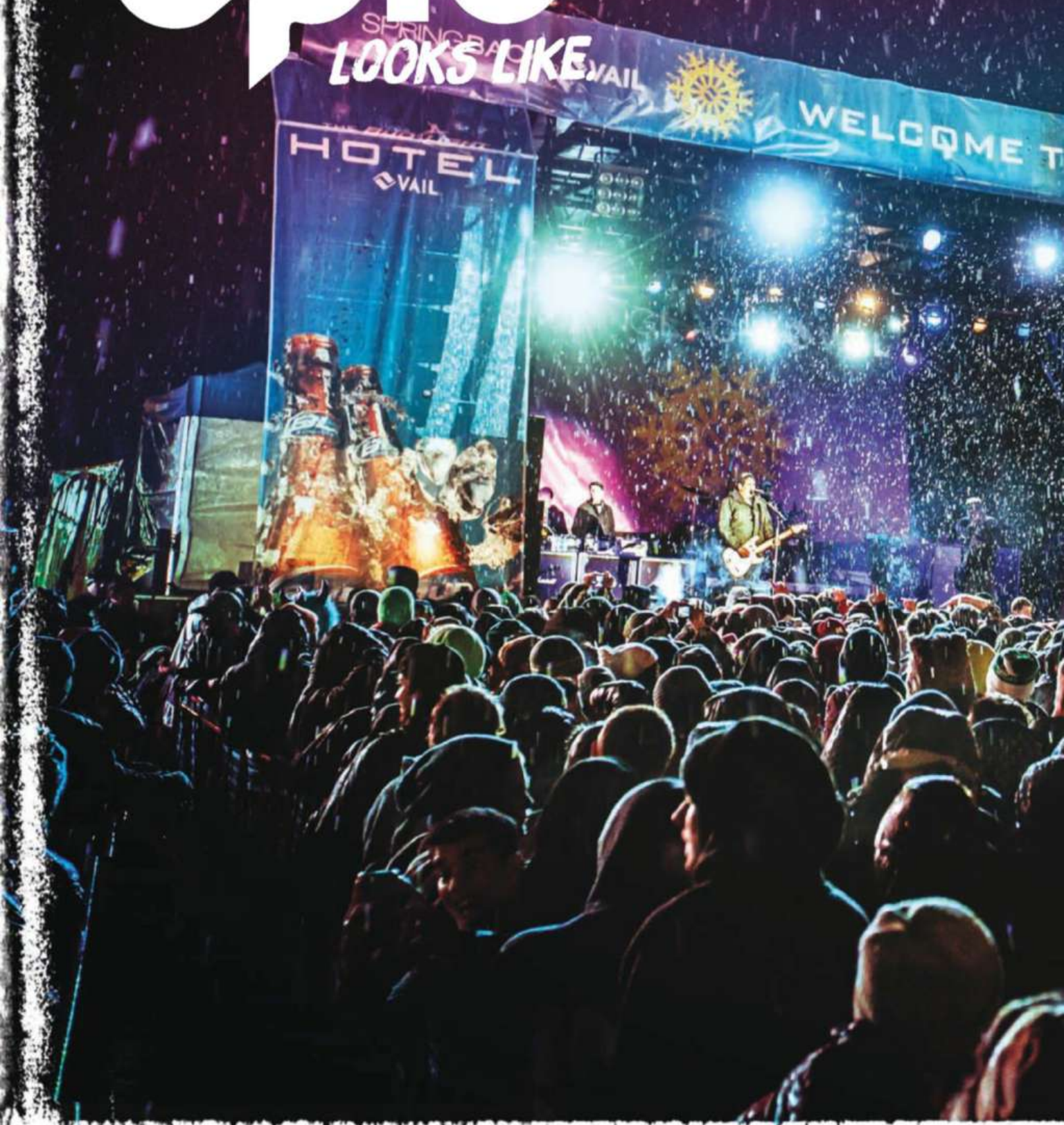


DAVID CARLIER

Growing up next to 14,295-foot Dent Blanche in Hérémence, Switzerland, mountain guide Gilles Sierro always wanted to ski the mountain's remote east face. Last April, when conditions became safe enough, he finally got the chance. Carlier captured him from a helicopter on a morning run. "He said he couldn't deny feeling some apprehension when he got to the top," says the photographer, who lives in nearby Aubonne. "He's been gazing at it all his life, but once you're on the face, you realize how steep it really is."

THE TOOLS: Leica S Type 006, 35mm f/2.5 lens, ISO 100, f/4.8, 1/4,000 second

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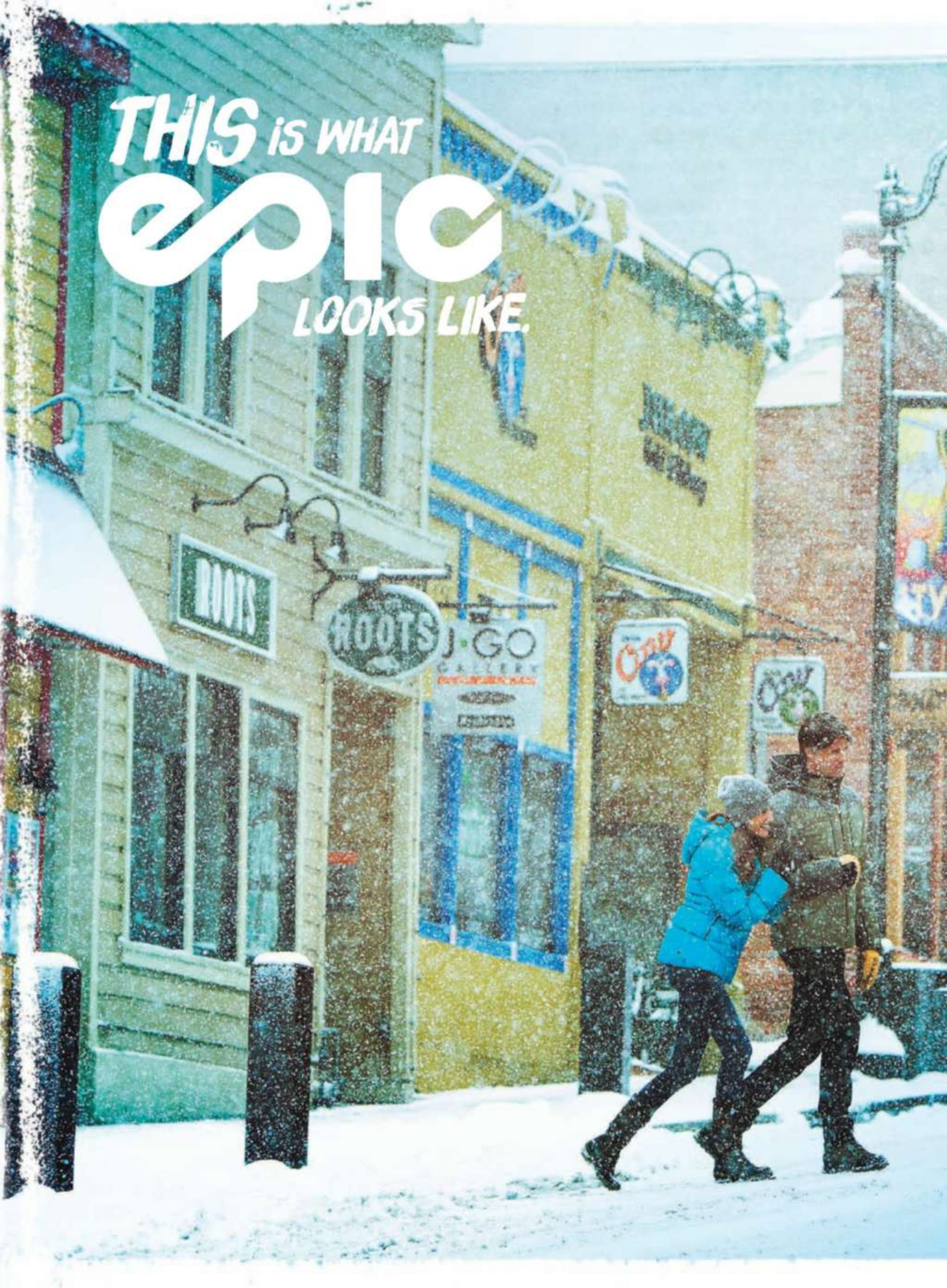




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BEN GAVELDA

Gavelda was among the first to ride the newly built Peak to Creek trail on Reco Mountain, in British Columbia's Selkirk range, when he joined pro mountain biker Darren Butler there in August. "I hadn't had a trail start at the literal peak of a mountain before," says the Durango, Colorado, photographer, describing the 360-degree view and 100-foot shale face on either side of the path. "The rest of it is an alpine pump track—you can just float through it. I've never ridden another mountain-bike trail like it."

THE TOOLS: Canon 5D Mark III, 24–70mm f/2.8L lens, ISO 100, f/7.1, 1/200 second

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ADD A LAYER 

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JON GRIFFITH

Last July, Griffith's long-time friend Ueli Steck, the elite alpinist, invited him to scale four peaks in the Mont Blanc massif, on the border of France and Italy, in a single day—part of Steck's attempt to climb all eighty-two 4,000-meter summits in the Alps. They were done by noon, with Griffith having captured Steck at the top of Grand Pilier D'Angle around 8 A.M. "When you're with Ueli, there's no hanging around," says the British photographer, who lives in Chamonix, France. "You have to shoot quite literally from the hip."

THE TOOLS: Canon 5D Mark III, 16–35mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 200, f/14, 1/250 second



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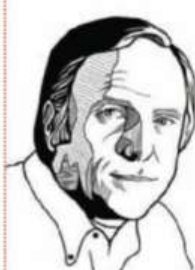
OPPABLE

"IF YOU THINK A HELICOPTER IS GOING TO FLY OUT AND COME PLUCK YOUR ASS OUT OF THE WATER," SAID COAST GUARD SUPERVISOR SUSAN PICKRELL, "IT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN." —ABE STREEP, PAGE 82

Mobbed

You might never have heard of Mick Fanning, our cover subject this month, but I'm pretty confident you've seen him in action. After the World Surf League posted a YouTube video of the Australian pro fending off a shark during a competition at South Africa's legendary J-Bay on July 19, coverage of the incident clogged innumerable Facebook feeds. The video has since been viewed more than 22 million times—not including the dozens of copycat posts and embedded videos found in hundreds of subsequent news stories. Fanning was already a three-time world surfing champion, but unless you're Kelly Slater, that doesn't make you a household name. Now he's officially YouTube famous.

Social media is a fickle and ravenous beast, however. Like all viral stories, Fanning's shark encounter was entirely consumed within a few days, quickly replaced by Donald Trump updates and Deflategate analysis. We wondered what happened with Fanning after the waters calmed. Given his near-death experience, he's the perfect person to dish out some life advice in conjunction with our bucket list ("This Is How You Do It," page 62). He also fits well into an issue that's serendipitously strewn with examples of the evolving power of social media. This month's Dispatches (page 32) opens with a shot of the impossibly small Fox Rio doing a rail slide at a skate park in Encinitas, California. We learned of this six-year-old prodigy through his parents' wildly popular Instagram account. Senior editor Grayson Schaffer, meanwhile, takes a deep dive into the new Instagram economy, where star shooters and huckers alike are converting big followings into hard cash. In "Pics or It Didn't Happen" (page 76), Schaffer chronicles an Alberta road trip with *Outside* contributing photographer Jimmy Chin, demonstrating how content and commerce are suddenly colliding in ways not possible even five years ago. Finally, Abe Streep reports on a grassroots sailing race that owes its existence to crowdfunding and online networking ("The Greatest Boat Race Ever Dreamed Up Over Beers" page 82). The event might never have gotten off the ground if adventurer Colin Angus hadn't publicized his entry on Facebook. Print may still rival digital for deeply reported stories like these, but there's no question anymore where the ideas are being generated. —CHRISTOPHER KEYES (@KEYESER)



SEA CHANGE

Sylvia Earle has dedicated her life to protecting the world's oceans from human mistreatment. While reporting "Earle Power" (page 92), his profile of the oceanographer, **Ian Frazier** came to admire her work as an activist. But he wasn't quite cajoled into giving up fishing, a lifelong passion, which Earle says amounts to torturing wildlife. "Talking to her is like talking to a fish," says the Montclair, New Jersey, writer. "I might stick to fly-fishing with barbless hooks, but she totally persuaded me that you can't eat big fish. I can't even look at sushi anymore."



MAST TRANSIT

"With 53 teams, you could write 53 stories," says contributing editor Abe Streep, who traveled from his Wyoming home to cover the Race to Alaska, a 600-mile dash from Washington through the Inside Passage ("The Greatest Boat Race Ever Dreamed Up Over Beers," page 82). Seattle photographer **Michael Hanson** shot the action from canoes and jerry-rigged catamarans. "Some were in kayaks, some in elite craft; some planned heavy paddling, some heavy sailing," says Hanson. "It was like a choose-your-own-adventure novel."



FEED YOURSELF

Earlier this year, senior editor **Grayson Schaffer** decamped for Alberta to write about a new type of photo tour: the all-expenses-paid ski romp for shooters with prodigious Instagram followings ("Pics or It Didn't Happen," page 76). As Schaffer discovered, the photo-sharing site hasn't just changed how photographers connect with audiences; it's changed the way they make money, too. Here are several who've found their niche, sorted by interest.

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FROM THE EDITORS' INBOX
 "This shoot is amazing! Can we have more space?? It's sooo good."

—DESIGN DIRECTOR HANNAH MCCAUGHEY, AFTER REVIEWING PHOTOS OF SKATER FOX RIO, PROFILED ON PAGE 32

FEEDBACK

HEADS IN THE CLOUDS

It took Hollywood almost 20 years of script wrangling, casting crusades, and high-altitude location scouting to finally get the 1996 Mount Everest tragedy to the big screen. In September, we covered the drama in an oral history of the film ("Everest Stays in the Picture"), and readers eagerly weighed in.

The filmmakers' decision may have been to focus *Everest's* story on Beck Weathers and Rob Hall, but why wasn't the support from their vastly more experienced Sherpas a bigger part of your article? You include that one of these Sherpas was consultant on the film, but he is never identified by name.

JOYCE McDONOUGH
 ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Jason Clarke, Josh Brolin, and Jake Gyllenhaal have survived absolutely nothing like Mount Everest. The only controversy they are igniting revolves around whether using that much hair grease poses a public fire hazard. *Everest* deserves a mention, but keep those pretty boys off the cover.

ANDREW ROBERTSON
 DEERFIELD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

THE WOODSHED

In the August issue, "USGS Topographical Map" gave the wrong year for John Wesley Powell's 1869 Grand Canyon voyage, and "Elements of Adventure" credited the LED headlamp to Petzl in 2001 instead of PTEC in 1999. In September, "Clear Winners" misidentified Vermont Distilling as Vermont Spirits, and a photo of Bumble Bee, Arizona, in "Hometown Heroes" was captioned Flagstaff. *Outside* regrets the errors.

HERE'S YOUR SIGN

As part of your article on Glenwood Springs, Colorado, you printed a picture of a gentleman walking on a floating log at Hanging Lake ("Hometown Heroes"). Did you take the time to find out that this is absolutely forbidden? Your magazine has now prompted even more scofflaws to ignore the rules and do whatever they want.

KAE McDONALD
 CARBONDALE, COLORADO

Editors' note: Shortly after publication, roughly every person within 50 miles of Hanging Lake wrote to tell us that walking on the logs or entering the water is a huge no-no in this fragile ecosystem. We have since changed the photo online.

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Between the Lines

GEARHEAD IN CHIEF

Our look at apparel company Voormi ("Hooded Crusader," page 36) was reported by appropriately obsessed senior gear editor **Axie Navas**, who oversees coverage for the Web and helms both of our annual Buyer's Guides. (The winter 2016 edition is on newsstands now.) Here's how the former competitive skier and road cyclist reached the pinnacle of glory.

1990–2008

Raised in Vail, Colorado, sharing slopes and paths with European royalty. "Vail haters can say what they want, but there's no better place to learn to ski and ride a bike."

2008

Wins "almost every race" while skiing for Northwestern University's club team.

2011

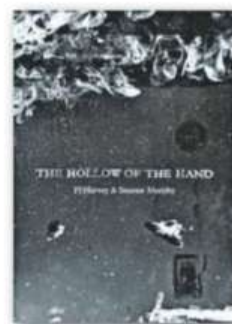
Lost her favorite carbon frame after crashing her roof-racked bike into the canopy of a drive-through.

2012

Places 24th in the Collegiate Road National Championships.

2014

Joins the *Outside* staff, upgrades her gear closet—at least most of it. "I've had the same pair of ski boots for 15 years."



BY OUR CONTRIBUTORS BOOK REVIEWS IN 30 WORDS OR LESS

The Hollow of the Hand, by PJ Harvey and Seamus Murphy

\$85, BLOOMSBURY
 Longtime *Outside* photographer Murphy partnered with British singer-songwriter Harvey for a book of poetry paired with his photographs from Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Washington, D.C.

Alone on the Wall, by Alex Honnold with David Roberts

\$27, W. W. NORTON & COMPANY
 Roberts follows Honnold's journey to free-soloing supremacy, from the walls of Nevada's Red Rocks to the Fitz Roy Traverse in Patagonia and Mexico's Sendero Luminoso.



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GENIUS SOLUTION FOR MUSCLE CRAMPS

When muscle cramps hit Dr. Rod MacKinnon while kayaking in rough waters, two things smacked him like a raging rapid: fear and insight. The fear of being stuck in shark-filled waters triggered an insight for the Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist that set him on course to invent the most effective way to prevent muscle cramps. His genius discovery? To treat the nerve instead of the muscle. Along with fellow kayaker and Harvard Medical School professor, Dr. Bruce Bean, Rod set out to find a solution. Their four years of researching, testing, and electrifying led to a scientific breakthrough that will improve athletic performance forever.



Get the story at itsthenerve.com

Between the Lines

WHAT WE'RE WATCHING THIS MONTH

On *Expedition Iceland*, a new documentary from OutsideTelevision, a team of winter athletes including snowboarder Celia Miller and Discrete Clothing founder Julian Carr set sail from Isafjörður on the Westfjords peninsula to the mountains and glaciers of Hornstrandir Nature Reserve. Tune in to Dish Network channel 390 beginning October 23 at 9 P.M. to watch them base at a 100-year-old farmhouse and explore 75 square miles full of untracked descents.



Ashima
Shiraishi

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE

This fall, Outside Online launches **She's Got Next**, a series of profiles and interviews featuring the women to watch in 2016. We'll focus on underrecognized, kick-ass ladies like climber Ashima Shiraishi, skier KT Miller, brewer Ayla Bystrom-Williams, and enviro-booster Taylor Freesolo Rees. outsideonline.com/shesgotnext

GO WITH US

Outside's outfitter, Outside GO, is launching an eight-day trip to Antarctica in winter 2016–17. After arriving in Chile and exploring the town of Punta Arenas, you'll fly across the Drake Passage and explore the South Shetland Islands up close, with opportunities for kayaking, snowshoeing, and swimming (for bragging rights). Photo hungry? The polar safari gets you close to local penguins and whales. From \$10,795; outsidego.com



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SLEEPING. WATER.

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YOU KNOW
HOW TO PREVENT
MUSCLE CRAMPS?

THINK AGAIN.
There's been a
SCIENTIFIC
BREAKTHROUGH
by a NOBEL PRIZE
winning neuroscientist
and endurance athlete.
A **GENIUS SOLUTION**
FROM NATURE
that prevents
muscle cramps
BY TREATING
THE NERVE.
Athletic performance
WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.

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— **COMING 2016** —

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

DISPATCHES

Prince of the Pop Shove-It

INTRODUCING FOX RIO,
THE 42-POUND FUTURE
OF SKATEBOARDING

by Brett Smith

IN APRIL 2014, four-year-old Fox Rio was waiting for his dad, Jamie Brunner, to get fitted for a snowboard at a local sporting-goods store when he saw a skateboard and started riding it through the aisles. Though Fox had never been on a skateboard before, he took to it immediately, and Jamie bought one for his son. The next day he and his wife, Meagan, awoke at 5 A.M. to a strange noise in their Issaquah, Washington, driveway—Fox was attempting his first ollie. Since then he has proven himself the most talented six-year-old in the sport: at four he could land a 180 off a 30-inch ledge; at five he was stomping out kick-flips, 360 flips, and boardslides; these days he's working on 540s. (Watch his progress on his

parent-managed Instagram feed: @fox_rio.) In August 2014, Fox began riding competitively. He says that when he arrives at skate contests, where the youngest competition category is often ten and under, older kids are skeptical of his abilities. To prove that he belongs, he makes a statement immediately. "I find the biggest rail in the park and I hit it," he says. Fox's goal is to compete at the X Games when he's eight. In June, he got a taste of the experience when he took part in a precontest demo at X Games Austin, in Texas, that also featured Tony Hawk. When Brunner ran up to Hawk after a run, Jamie thought his son was going to high-five the skating legend. Instead he asked, "Can you tie my shoe?"



11.15

Photograph by DAVE LAURIDSEN



Rio ripping
in Encinitas,
California,
in August



BOOM GOES THE DYNAMITE

1. Not Your Bro's Octocopter

Mountain Drone's prototype, the 35-pound Prospect, is made from various drone parts. It's equipped with eight 30-inch propellers, has a seven-foot wingspan, and can fly for up to 45 minutes on a charge. "We've got the biggest, baddest drone there is," says company co-founder Brent Holbrook.

2. Auto Pit Sensors will calculate snow-water equivalent—a measure of the snow-pack's water content—and depth, allowing patrols to identify weak layers and breaking points.

3. Blasts Instead of Boot Packs Rather than spend hours

hiking to an avalanche path, patrollers could select a preprogrammed route, indicating where the drone should fly, and then manually drop the charges. "Twenty years from now, we might be saying, 'Remember when they used to let us go out into avalanche paths?'" says patroller Paul Baugher.

4. Secure Line Mountain Drones is hoping to incorporate military technology into its machines' code so they can't be hijacked by hackers.

5. Eyes in the Sky An onboard camera lets pilots make sure no one is in the area before releasing the charges.

6. Cleared for Detonation The drone is capable of carrying a 17-pound payload, enough to clear five avalanche paths in a single flight.

Bombs over Bald Mountain

THAT HIGH-PITCHED WHINE YOU'RE ABOUT TO HEAR AT YOUR FAVORITE SKI HILL? IT'S THE SOUND OF DRONES DROPPING AVY CHARGES.

by Anna Callaghan

IN 2010, JACKSON HOLE ski patroller Mark "Big Wally" Wolling was using hand charges to set off controlled avalanches when the slope above him broke free. He was carried over a cliff, buried, and died three days later. Though it's rare for the job to be fatal—since 2009, one ski patroller has died each year in the United States—it's not uncommon for avalanche-control personnel to be in some precarious situations. Paul Baugher, head of

the ski patrol at Crystal Mountain, in Washington State, has been buried three times. "We do mitigation work with explosives, which have inherent danger, and we do it in bad weather," says Baugher. "If you can reduce someone's exposure to dangerous snow conditions, that's huge."

In December 2013, ski buddies Brent Holbrook, Warren Linde, Gray Byers, and Robert Blank launched Mountain Drones,

based in Telluride, Colorado, to do just that. How? Take the bombs out of the patrollers' hands, strap them to an octocopter, and let the unmanned craft do the job instead. The company performed some test flights last season and will expand to other Colorado resorts—using dummy explosives—this winter. Patrollers say it could be a vital tool. "We've talked with half a dozen ski patrols that are very interested," says Holbrook. The only other hurdle is FAA approval, which could take a while—the agency can't even figure out how to regulate drones *without* explosives strapped to them.



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Places

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THE ALL-NEW
TACOMA



Voormi's
High-E
hoodie

Hooded Crusader

THIS MONTH, A TINY COLORADO STARTUP WILL ATTEMPT A BOLD RESCUE OF THE NATION'S MOUNTAIN TOWNS WHILE REINVENTING WATERPROOF-BREATHABLE FABRICS. HOW? WITH THIS SUPER-COMFY JACKET.

by Axie Navas

FIVE YEARS AGO, Dan English, a former manager at Microsoft and an executive vice president at hunting-apparel company Mossy Oak, had a revelation: there were too many clothes in his gear shed. Most of it worked all right but was so specialized that he had to bring a suitcase full of layers whenever he traveled. Many of the hard shells were so flimsy, they didn't last more than a few seasons.

"I wanted to know how you could wear a piece of apparel for longer," English says, "both throughout the day and over the span of years."

Since the 1970s, companies had been making shells the same way: by sandwiching a waterproof membrane between two pieces of fabric. Confined by overseas supply chains and textiles sourced largely from two companies—eVent and Gore-Tex—innovation was incremental at best.

THIS TIME WE MEAN IT

VOORMI'S NEW JACKETS MIGHT BE THE BEST SHELLS EVER MADE—THOUGH WE'VE MADE BOLD CLAIMS LIKE THAT BEFORE



The Sibley Guide to Birds, Second Edition

WHAT WE SAID: "Stands alone among contemporary guidebooks" (2014).
VERDICT: Nail on the head.



Völkl Mantra

WHAT WE SAID: "Your one-ski quiver" (2012).
VERDICT: It's not quite this year's Kastle FX95 HP (see page 104), but it's still pretty excellent.



Trek 5500

WHAT WE SAID: "All the bike you'll ever need" (2003).
VERDICT: Discontinued in 2004.

So in 2010, English established Voormi, named for a fictional, yeti-like mountain-dwelling beast, in a rusty, flood-prone building in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Setting up shop in, say, Boulder, which is home to dozens of outdoor companies, would have made life easier. But the team he assembled—his son, Dustin, a guide on Denali; Doug Lumb, who spent 43 years at Polartec developing fabrics used by Nike, Salomon, and the U.S. military; and Timm Smith, a former chemical engineer at Gore-Tex—worried that moving to a gear hub would only breed more cookie-cutter apparel. Pagosa Springs, a town of 1,700 surrounded by nearly three million acres of national forest and wilderness, seemed like the perfect undiscovered mountain playground.

"Working in Pagosa allows us to focus on things that are needed rather than things that are trending," Smith says.

What was needed, they decided, wasn't



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IN THE MORNING



EXPERTISE



OUTDOOR SCHOOL



GEAR

GET SET FOR THE SEASON



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Sewer Brian Slean
at Voormi's Pagosa
Springs factory

another new material but an entirely new approach to making it. "If you lay out all the garments in the industry, they're all made in one or two factories, and they all perform the same way," says Dustin English, who serves as Voormi's director of product integrity. "We wanted to make something unique from natural fibers using resources in the area we're playing in."

Instead of gluing pieces of fabric to a membrane, Voormi developed a way to knit a textile—in this case, wool—through it. The new method, patented under the name Core Construction, creates a single-layer jacket that's mostly weatherproof but wears like a fleece. The technology will debut in two shells this October—the men's Fall Line and women's High-E—which will be sold along with Voormi's other products in 40 retailers and at Voormi.com. In *Outside's* tests, Core Construction was adept at deflecting snow and wind, was warm enough to wear all day on a ski hill, and fit and felt like a sweatshirt. It didn't hold up in sleet, but according to Smith, it isn't meant to. "There are a lot of 100 percent seam-taped hard shells out there," he says. "I'm not sure the world needs another one."

The breakthrough fabric isn't the only

way that Voormi is trying to change the way apparel companies work. Instead of outsourcing production, it built factories in small towns in Colorado. The wool comes from merino sheep raised in the Rocky Mountains, gets turned into yarn in North and South Carolina, and is stitched into apparel in Pagosa Springs and Rifle, Colorado. Think of it as the craft-beer approach to manufacturing, more Oskar Blues than Coors.

"We don't want the 100,000-square-foot factory in China or Malaysia," Smith says. "We want to go into rural America and find small mountain towns with people who can sew living in them. Maybe there are only ten of those people in Pagosa Springs. But if I have ten places with ten sewers each, then I have a 100-sewer factory."

The partners hope to transform those mountain-town economies from ones composed mainly of low-wage seasonal work to ones with a diverse, stable revenue stream—without any connection to ski resorts and tourism. "Most people who grow up in a mountain town have a minimum of two, three jobs," says Dan. "We're trying to provide year-round

employment with benefits."

The trick will be to maintain that philosophy if the technology takes off. Though Smith says that Voormi has no plans to experiment beyond natural fibers, that doesn't mean other brands won't.

For example, police departments might want to use Kevlar instead of wool and weave it through nylon to create lightweight body armor. Phillip Gibson, a scientist with the U.S. Army's Molecular Sciences Engineering team, who has worked closely with companies like Nike and Polartec, says the technology could also lead to improvements

in the apparel worn by troops to protect against chemical and biological threats, perhaps by weaving plastic threads through a material like Tyvek. "The chemical-biological clothing has many of the same issues as outdoor clothing," Gibson says. "You want it to be breathable but to keep something out at the same time and not be too stiff."

To help expand Core Construction's range of applications, the Englishes created a second business, called Starting with New Rules, to license the technology to other manufacturers, the same way Gore licenses its membranes to Black Diamond and Mammut.

When we spoke in July, Smith wouldn't divulge anything more about potential partnerships. For now, he said, he's focused on his own new line.

"We have all these cool technologies, and we express them through Voormi's products," says Smith. "The idea is: show the market it can be done, create the consumer pool behind the technology, and then create the demand from other companies." **O**

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOOL

10,000 B.C.:

Primitive peoples in the Mesopotamian plain domesticate sheep.

4000 B.C.:

Babylonians spin wool by hand to produce the first woven garments on record.

500–1000 A.D.:

The spinning wheel allows fibers to be created faster.

1700s: Wool is mass produced, thanks to a combination of the Watt steam engine and large looms, making England rich off the resulting hats and pants.

1973: Treated wool is developed that can be machine washed and tumble dried. Unfortunately, the fabric is exceptionally itchy.

1994: SmartWool and Icebreaker experiment with wool from merino sheep, launching the modern era of wool products.

2015: Voormi weaves merino wool through a waterproof membrane.

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Reunited: Salvador Alvarenga with his daughter Fatima

Stranger than Fiction

THE BEST SURVIVAL BOOK IN A DECADE TELLS THE UNBELIEVABLE TALE OF A MAN WHO SPENT MORE THAN A YEAR ADRIFT AT SEA

by Luis Alberto Urrea



IN 2014, Salvador Alvarenga was washed ashore in the Marshall Islands, claiming to have drifted from Chiapas, Mexico—more than 6,000 miles—for nearly 15 months. Jonathan Franklin's book about his time at sea, *438 Days* (\$26, Atria Books), reads like a mezcal hallucination that starts in mythic gear and escalates into sheer madness.

We meet Alvarenga as he stumbles over the rugged Mexican coastline, barefoot and bleeding on the sharp rocks, having fled escalating violence in El Salvador. He holes up in the fishing hamlet of Costa Azul and wins the trust of the village's knife-fighting outlaw fishermen, with names like the Wolfman, by voluntarily sweeping the streets with a cast-off broom. Once he is admitted to their circle, his reputation becomes legendary—he can eat practically anything, and he can catch more fish than anyone.

Alvarenga and his fellow fishermen party away their scant pay after risking their lives

in brutal pursuit of tuna and hammerheads. They eat and fight and drink and whore. And they smoke pot. Lots of pot. Big, cigar-size bombers, especially when they take their open pirogues out into the Straits of Tehuantepec. And then a storm hurling ten-foot waves and 60-mile-an-hour winds blows Alvarenga's 25-foot craft far out to sea.

Jonathan Franklin is an old hand at Latin American reportage—he wrote *33 Men*, about the trapped Chilean miners—but with Alvarenga's epic tale he outdoes himself.

Alvarenga and Cordoba, his inexperienced partner, face death from the first gusts of the storm. They deploy a sea anchor made of plastic bottles to give them stability and drag. After the storm, they face the empty Pacific with only a knife and a machete.

Cordoba does not survive long, though Alvarenga briefly leaves the rotting dead man at the bow for company. Once alone, he has near misses with ships that pass him blindly.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE
TALLYING THE TRIALS OF OTHERS WHO SPENT MONTHS LOST AT SEA



286 days

Mexican fishermen Salvador Ordóñez, Lucio Rendón, and Jesús Vidaña were set adrift by a 2005 storm.



133 days

Chinese sailor Poon Lim's ship was sunk in the Atlantic Ocean in 1942 by a German U-boat.



76 days

In 1982, Rhode Island sailor Steven Callahan's sailboat sank, and he spent more than two months on a life raft.

He rides out storms and hallucinates. "Former girlfriends visited him for nights of passion in his hammock back at the Costa Azul lagoon," writes Franklin. "He scored goals in soccer matches at his favorite beachside pickup field. He scripted the reunion with his long-estranged daughter Fatima."

But he survives by snaring fish by hand, drinking turtle blood and rainwater, and catching birds—breaking their wings to keep them like chickens to be eaten later.

After a lifetime of reporting in Mexico, I thought I'd seen it all, that the place could no longer surprise me. Alvarenga has proven me wrong.

A BRIEF EXCERPT FROM A BOOK BY SOMEONE WHO WILLINGLY SPENDS COUNTLESS DAYS IN OPEN WATER:

"The deadly jellyfish, the prowling predator sharks, the unpredictable swirling counterclockwise eddies, the sudden tropical lightning storms with their abrupt fifty-mile-an-hour winds. All the emotion, the anxiety, the hope, the Dream, the potential of history in our grasp, the four failures, the lessons from those failures, the good people who have taken the journey—all of it now pulses through me."

—FROM OCTOBER'S *FIND A WAY* (\$27, KNOPF), BY DIANA NYAD, ABOUT HER ATTEMPTS TO SWIM FROM CUBA TO KEY WEST, FLORIDA



Dark Workhorse

A GROUNDBREAKING NEW CAMERA FROM SONY MAY HAVE PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS DITCHING THEIR BULKY DSLRS **BY JAKOB SCHILLER**

PICK ANY PHOTO in this magazine, and chances are it was shot with a digital single-lens reflex camera. DSLRs produce print-quality images, are fast enough for action shots, and are compatible with a huge range of lenses—from macros for zooming in on ants to telephotos for capturing skiers on distant peaks. ¶ This fall, photographers in droves will likely consider selling off that gear in favor of the mirrorless Sony a7R II. Introduced in August, the a7R II represents a quantum leap in camera technology. While DSLRs use a large sensor and a mirror to let photographers see the image in a viewfinder, mirrorless cameras nix the mirror and usually make do with a smaller sensor. That used to mean lower-quality pics, but no more. The a7R II is just as good as a DSLR. Plus, it shoots 4K (ultra HD) video and weighs less than two pounds. That's lighter than most DSLRs—important when you're hauling gear up ropes in Yosemite. ¶ "I can carry two bodies and five lenses in the same space I used to carry a body and three lenses," says pro shooter Ben Moon. (Full disclosure: Moon is now a company ambassador, though he'd already switched to the a7R II before he was brought on.) ¶ The centerpiece of the a7R II is a 42.4-megapixel, backside-illuminated full-frame sensor. Translation: it's the rare camera that delivers a ton of resolution and performs well in near darkness. There is one drawback: Sony's full-frame-lens lineup is currently limited to 12, far below the number offered for DSLRs from Canon and Nikon. The company promises 20 by the end of next year. \$3,199; sony.com

Read our full review at outsideonline.com/sonycamera.



WHERE TO GO NOW

DESTINATIONS 11.15

Lounging
in Belize

Grand Central

THE SEVEN SMALL COUNTRIES WEDGED BETWEEN MEXICO AND COLOMBIA BOAST THE WORLD'S GREATEST DENSITY OF ADVENTURE PER SQUARE MILE. OUR SCOUTS EXPLORED CENTRAL AMERICA'S REEFS, JUNGLES, AND BEACHES, AND CAME BACK WITH THE KNOWLEDGE YOU NEED FOR YOUR OWN EXPEDITION.

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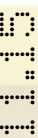
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Clockwise: the waves roll into Punta Mango; the infinity pool at Hotel Los Mangos; local transportation; ready for action; down the line at El Tunco; a Pacific view



El Salvador

Pupusas and point breaks

When I'm going on a surf trip to another country, I don't want to feel like I'm in Newport Beach, which is why last June I packed my boards and flew to tiny El Salvador. The country has issues with gang violence, but tourists are almost never affected, and it's the perfect place for a Central American experience without all the gringos. So bone up on your Spanish and start with the small coastal town of El Tunco, about 40 minutes south of the airport in San Salvador. On weekends it's packed with day-trippers from the capital, but it empties out during the week. The rocky beaches



west of town offer a beginner-friendly surf spot with long, crumbling rights and steeper, shorter lefts. Surfers have known about the point breaks spaced every couple of miles along the country's south-facing coast for years, but somehow it's still easy to find nooks and crannies to yourself. For bigger waves, head seven miles west to El Zonte, a two-restaurant town with a fun right point break. Stay at hotel Esencia Nativa (from \$22; esencia.nativa.com), where



Alex Noboa and his wife take turns running the joint and sneaking out to surf. Whoever happens to be out of the water can give you the beta on surf lessons, inland waterfall hikes, and coffee

tours. Farther down the coast toward Honduras—what El Salvadorans call the east coast—an even more rural experience can be found. The surf spots are less consistent, but when

the swell hits it's unbelievably good. Countless surf flicks, like Reef's *Cancer to Capricorn*, were filmed at the Las Flores break and the half-dozen other world-class waves in the area. The crown jewel of the region is Punta Mango, a 200-yard cobblestone point break 20 minutes west of the town of El Cuco. Stay at Hotel Los Mangos (from \$125; losmangoshotel.com), which overlooks the barreling, Americano-free waves. —MATT SKENAZY

Crucial Beta

TICKET TO RIDE

You don't need to rent a car in El Salvador. For long trips, arrange a driver through your hotel; the 4.5-hour ride from El Cuco to Tunco ran us \$125. For shorter excursions, take the bus. Many are kitted out with skull stick shifts and throbbing Latin beats, and 25 cents will get you and your board anywhere you want to go.



Local Flavor

GET STUFFED

Wherever you go in El Salvador, you'll see women pounding out dough to load up pupusas with cheese, beans, chicken, chorizo, or carne asada. In El Cuco, you can't get one before 5 P.M.; in the rest of the country, they seem to be available 24/7. No matter where you are, they'll run you 50 cents to two bucks.

CLAIM YOUR MOMENT

Bonds are formed here. The adventure of the mountains creates stories worth telling and memories that will last long beyond this winter. You belong here.

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ASPEN  SNOWMASS.



Clockwise: the beach at Santa Teresa; a studio at Blue Spirit; beach-side refreshments; post-yoga lounge facilities; a howler monkey in the trees



Crucial Beta

DOWNWARD DOG

The town of Nosara is one of the best places to practice yoga in the Western Hemisphere. Our favorite retreat: Blue Spirit. Started by a founder of the renowned Omega Institute in upstate New York, it's the perfect place to earn a teaching credential. The monthlong Jivamukti training gets you starting certification in a vinyasa-based yoga (\$6,350, all-inclusive; blue spiritcostarica.com). Not ready to go pro? Book a one-week retreat (teachers and practices change frequently), then lounge in the resort's infinity pool, try a Reiki treatment at the on-site spa, and roll out your mat twice a day with panoramic views of the Pacific (from \$500).

Costa Rica

Howler monkeys, waterfalls, and empty beaches

If you had the time, you could easily pass months in Costa Rica, hopping from the Monte Verde cloud forests to the world's most famous beach breaks. But when planning a weeklong trip with a group of friends, we limited ourselves to a single geographic area, since we planned on traveling by buses and wanted to really get to know the place. We settled on the Pacific coast of the Nicoya Peninsula, specifically the pint-size town of Santa Teresa. Nearby Nosara is a famous surfing destination, which means plenty of people know the area is worth a visit. But the region has managed to main-

tain a laid-back feel—a rare thing in this sometimes touristy country. After taking the ferry from mainland Puntarenas, the psychological equivalent of leaving Las Vegas for Joshua Tree, we headed straight for the Kina Surf Shop (rentals from \$12; kinasurfcostarica.com) and spent the next two days surfing poorly at Playa El Carmen and eating chicken tacos, yucca fries, and ceviche at a little shack called Taco Corner. Our third morning, we traveled by bus nine miles to the even smaller fishing village of Playa Montezuma in search of a series of cascading river pools, about a 20-minute



hike from the village center. We whiled away an entire afternoon swimming under a waterfall, listening to the screams of monkeys in the trees, and watching kids splash around on a precarious-looking rope swing. On the way out, we picked up a few tortillas and a bag of avocados at the market before heading back to the quiet of Santa Teresa. The only souvenir I brought home was a pound of Costa Rican coffee. I can still smell it in my bag. —MEAGHEN BROWN



(1) Guatemala, (2) El Salvador, (3) Honduras, (4) Nicaragua, (5) Costa Rica, (6) Panama

Local Flavor LAGER TIME

Don't be tempted by a "tropical" cocktail in a hollowed-out pineapple just because you're in Costa Rica. Central America has mastered the art of the light lager. Each country has a brewery churning out refreshing low-alcohol suds (our favorite: El Salvador's Pilsener), and no matter which country you're in, that's what you should be drinking.



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Belize

Whale sharks, hot sauce, and family harmony

Planning a vacation that keeps an entire family happy is next to impossible. One person wants great food, another wants to sit on the beach, persons three through nine are indifferent, and the tenth hates humidity. Which roughly narrows the possibilities down to Portland, Maine, in August—or Belize just about anytime. That's why last April my in-laws and I headed to Placencia, a small fishing vil-

lage on the southern end of the country. Belize is a former British colony, so getting around was as easy as renting a car and being able to read at a fourth-grade level. From there my wife and I chased baby tarpon in inland lagoons (from \$450 per day; robertsgrove.com); her sister commuted between the salt-water pool at our rental house and the postcard beach in front of it (two-

bedrooms from \$2,900 for a week; cocoplumbelize.net); and the in-laws made frequent trips to the shockingly good Maya Beach Hotel Bistro for shrimp-stuffed squid with mango habanero sauce or braised Belizean lamb. But the real

highlight was the family bonding experience—a chance to snorkel with whale sharks as they made a brief mid-migration appearance. We took a boat beyond the Great Meso-American Reef, and there they were, great school-bus-size mammals splashing through 12-foot swells. Everyone dove in except the boat's captain and the poor guy—me—clinging

to an aluminum pole in the throes of seasickness. But, this being Belize, even the whale was accommodating—it surfaced before me as I emptied the last contents of my stomach into the ocean. “Not many people get to see one that close,” the captain said. “That’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience.” In other words: a perfect family vacation. —JONAH OGLES



Local Flavor

FEEL THE BURN

Ask for hot sauce at virtually any Belizean restaurant and they will bring you one brand: Marie Sharp's. Legend has it that Marie had a bumper habanero crop one year and, not knowing what else to do with it, ground it up, added some spices, and bottled it. The results—now offered in 11 flavors ranging from mild to “beware”—make Mexican hot sauces taste like tomato juice. It's hard to find outside the country, so load up at the airport.



Clockwise: Belize beach cruise; Xunantunich ruins; oceanfront property; searching for whale sharks



Crucial Beta

TOMB RAIDER

The Maya ruins in Belize are smaller than Mexico's, not as well maintained, and not nearly as popular. Which makes them a superb place to visit if you don't want to be herded like cattle through roped-off pathways. Significant portions of Lamanai (two hours northwest of Belize City) and Caracol (two hours south of San Ignacio) remain unexcavated and undeveloped, and they're ideal spots to explore freely. (Seriously, though, please stay off the ruins.)



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2016 GLC300 shown in Iridium Silver metallic paint with optional equipment. Vehicle available fall 2015. *MSRP excludes all options, taxes, title, registration, transportation charge and dealer prep. Options, model availability and actual dealer price may vary. See dealer for details. ©2015 Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC

For more information, call 1-800-FOR-MERCEDES, or visit MBUSA.com.

A
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THE
VODKA
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TIMELESS.

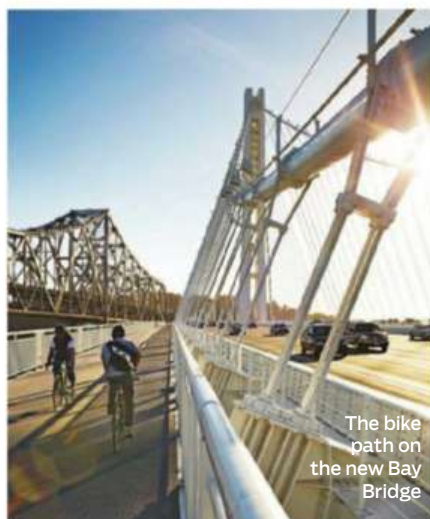
Active Cities



Homestead
restaurant



Joaquin
Miller
singletrack



The bike
path on the
new Bay
Bridge



Gearing
up for the
East Bay
Bike Party

The Oakland Athletics

MORE THAN JUST A REFUGE FROM THE TESLAS AND TECH BROS ACROSS THE WATER, THE CITY IS A BOOMING URBAN PLAYGROUND. A GUIDE TO THE EAST BAY'S BEST SPOTS TO WORK UP A SWEAT AND REFUEL AFTERWARD.

by Lois Parshley

Get Roped Up

GREAT WESTERN POWER COMPANY, a climbing gym in the heart of downtown, has 48-foot walls, a bouldering area, and a tricked-out weight room. Sign up for the lead class to get comfortable making clips and taking whippers. \$20 for a day pass; touchstoneclimbing.com/gwpower-co

Pack a Picnic

Our favorite bit of green space isn't a park. MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY, on Piedmont Avenue, is open until the sun goes down, has panoramic views of the San Francisco skyline, and is home to turkeys and deer. Too macabre? Hike to

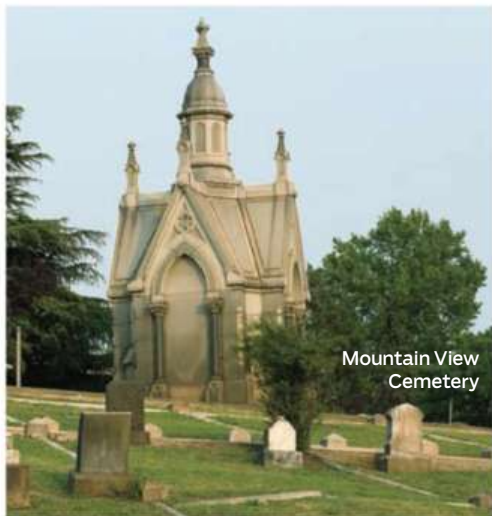
the top of SIBLEY VOLCANIC REGIONAL PRESERVE, where you'll find 10-million-year-old rock formations. Just be sure and mind the cows.

Take a Taco-Truck Tour

The Fruitvale neighborhood has the best Mexican food north of the border. SINALOA, 3132 International Blvd. The order: Fish tacos. EL NOVILLO, 1001 Fruitvale Blvd. The order: Carnitas with copious cilantro and pickled carrots. EL TIO JUAN, 4078 Foothill Blvd. The order: *Tripa* (tripe), for the adventurous.



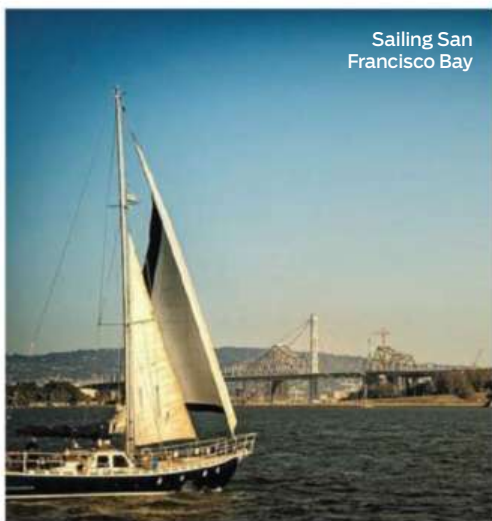
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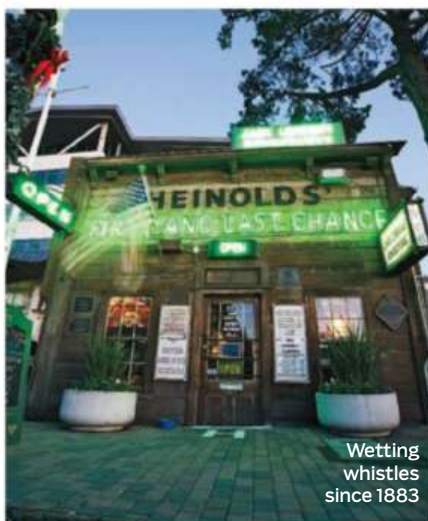
Mountain View Cemetery



Leading at the Great Western Power Company



Sailing San Francisco Bay



Wetting whistles since 1883

Eat Like a Local

Alice Waters's farm-to-table revolution has inched its way south from adjacent Berkeley. Book a table at HOMESTEAD for Sunday supper, which consists of three always changing, farm-fresh courses. \$52, including tip; homesteadoakland.com

Run for It

The 3.4-mile loop around LAKE MERRITT is the city's best route for weekday training and, since it's almost exactly five kilometers long, weekend racing.

Waterfront Barhop

Start at 132-year-old HEINOLD'S FIRST AND LAST CHANCE SALOON on Webster Street, a bar with slanted floors that has served dockworkers since the 1800s. Then rent a boat down the street at CALIFORNIA CANOE AND KAYAK and cruise the inner harbor past the old industrial waterfront and working port. After returning,

swing by BEER REVOLUTION around the corner on Third Street, which has a metal vibe and 50 brews on tap.

Hit the Dirt

Oakland has mountain-bike options just outside town. Bomb down the half-mile-long, singletrack Cinderella Trail in JOAQUIN MILLER STATE PARK, which connects to 40 miles of fire roads next door in Redwood Regional Park.

Ride the Streets

"The EAST BAY BIKE PARTY happens the second Friday of every month," says local photographer J.J. Harris. "The route always changes, but it's usually three or four stops around the East Bay. Anywhere from 500 to 2,500 cyclists show up. Riders have speakers mounted on their bikes and DJ from the iPad on their handlebars. My kind of people." Go to eastbay.bikeparty.wordpress.com for more info.

THE VODKA THAT TASTES LIKE VODKA.





INKED

A new company called SafetyTat is offering custom temporary tattoos to brand your brood with your contact info in case any of them wander off. This is either awful or awesome parenting—we can't quite decide which. \$21 for 24; safetytat.com

ROOM AND BOARD

A trip to Grain Surfboards in York, Maine, takes the travel souvenir far beyond T-shirts and snow globes. Students who attend the four-to-seven-day shaping seminars stay nearby and learn to use planes, chisels, and other woodworking tools to custom-craft their own surfboards. "We're on a little farm ten minutes from the beach," says Grain founder Mike LaVecchia. "By seven every morning, people are out trying demo boards." LaVecchia, 48, a former boat builder, recommends not shying away from the cooler months of the year—bigger, emptier waves during Maine's nor'easter-battered autumn are savored by some surfers. "Around November, there aren't that many people in the water," he says. "There are a loyal group of maybe 50 who surf year-round." From \$1,525; grainsurfboards.com —CHRIS CONNOLLY

Go List



SNOW DRIFT

LEARN TO DRIVE SAFER (OR FASTER) AT RALLY SCHOOL

There's a bend in the road up to the local ski hill in Santa Fe that locals call Texan Corner. On a powder day, it's not hard to see how it got that name: lots of immobilized cars with Lone Star plates. The lesson? Driving on snowy roads requires special skills, even if your car has four-wheel drive and a DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS bumper sticker. The best place to learn

them? Team O'Neil Rally School. Established in 1997 by two-time American rally champion Tim O'Neil, the school is like Hogwarts for gearheads, located amid a complex of private dirt roads in the backwoods of New Hampshire. The one-day winter-safety class (\$499) covers the basics of not ending up in a ditch. Or sign on for the one-to-five-day rally course, taught in one of Team O'Neil's specially prepped cars (from \$1,300). Held year-round,

the classes offer the ultimate off-road driving trip for the kind of person who finds 4x4'ing in Moab too tame. "It's for people who like going fast and being sideways," O'Neil says. The lessons of racing and staying safe in snow have plenty in common. "We start by teaching how skids happen, how accidents happen," he says. In other words, rally school could keep you out of the snow bank on Texan Corner. teamoneil.com —CHRIS COHEN

START ME UP

After a long day on the trails, returning to a car that won't turn over is a huge bummer. The Anker PowerCore Jump Starter 600 will bring your car back to life; as a bonus, a pair of USB ports let you charge a phone or tablet. It's the size of a VHS tape, but it'll still crank a five-liter V-8. And at just over a pound, it can do double-duty for, say, a week of backcountry Instagram harvesting. \$100; anker.com —CHRIS COHEN





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MORE DRIVEN.



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A Little Something for the Pain?

A NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING
NEUROSCIENTIST AND A
HARVARD NEUROBIOLOGIST
THINK THEY'VE DISCOVERED
THE ANTIDOTE FOR CRAMPING

by Peter Vigneron

WHEN LEBRON James famously dropped out of game one of the 2014 NBA Finals with a cramping left leg, many wondered if he was low on electrolytes. Gatorade even teased him on Twitter, suggesting he wouldn't have cramped if he'd been drinking their product. (James reps Powerade.) He was hardly alone. From tennis star Rafael Nadal (2011 U.S. Open) to marathoner Dathan Ritzenhein (2012 Olympic trials), athletes the world over have always been plagued by painful

muscle spasms that show up in the crucial late stages of fierce competition. Inevitably, these cramps are blamed on heat and dehydration. The only problem? Research tells us that neither have anything to do with it.

A Boston startup called Flex Pharma says it knows why cramps really happen and, more important, how to prevent them. Founded by Nobel Prize-winning neuroscientist Rod MacKinnon and Harvard neurobiology professor Bruce Bean, the company



Endo Down is a Skisport Center. La Parra, Chile. Photography: Kevin Clark



The Halo 28
JetForce: A revolution
in airbag technology.

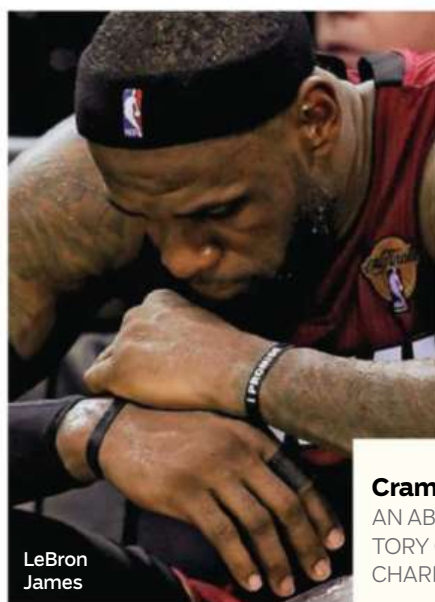


 **Black Diamond**

BlackDiamondEquipment.com



Marathoner
Dathan
Ritzenheim



LeBron
James

is testing a supplement that it says makes athletes less likely to cramp by resetting the motor nerves in seizing muscles. If true, Flex could revolutionize how cramps are understood and treated.

MacKinnon and Bean became interested in cramping accidentally. In March 2006, they went sea kayaking off an island near Cape Cod. Paddling hard in high seas, both got severe cramps in their arms. "It was actually quite scary," MacKinnon says. The cramps abated, but the pair soon started looking into the phenomenon, figuring there had to be some key to preventing it.

"We assumed there was a good way to treat cramps," MacKinnon says, "and we realized that actually, there's not a lot known." For much of the 20th century, physiologists believed that athletes cramped because they became dehydrated or lost electrolytes through sweating. But that hypothesis fell out of favor in the late 1990s, when a South African doctor named Martin Schwellnus theorized that distorted neural signaling between an athlete's muscles and the spine was the true culprit. When you're fatigued, he proposed, the motor reflex responsible for sending a "relax" signal to the spine becomes tired. When this happens, the "contract" signal keeps firing, and muscles become stuck.

With no definitive research on how to combat the faulty signal, athletes were left with two options: don't push too hard, or stop to stretch when cramps happen.

Bean and MacKinnon, intrigued by the neuromuscular hypothesis, figured there was a third solution. Both men had studied the nervous system throughout their careers, and MacKinnon's Nobel Prize was

awarded for work he'd done on ion-channel receptors, which control how electrical signals are transmitted between cells.

As they pored over the existing research, Bean and MacKinnon zeroed in on one thing: even though cramps didn't have any relation to electrolyte balances, some studies showed that drinking pickle juice or eating mustard helped prevent them.

The pair knew that pickle juice and mustard contain molecules called ion-channel activators, which trigger nerves in the digestive system. These activators are why spicy foods feel hot: they don't burn you, but they trigger the same nerve response that occurs when you come into contact with heat. Bean and MacKinnon wondered whether the activators in pickle juice and mustard were simultaneously calming nerves in other parts of the body that are responsible for muscle contraction. "We thought, If this is correct, there are much more potent activators," MacKinnon says.

By then, the pair had also come across research showing how to induce cramps in the lab by electrically stimulating muscles. They began experimenting with a home-brewed drink packed with several kinds of ion activators, taking sips and trying to zap

their feet into cramps while hanging out in the kitchen of Bean's Newton, Massachusetts, home. The early results were so encouraging that they filed a patent for their proprietary blend and formed Flex Pharma.

MacKinnon says that they've tested the supplement in randomized, controlled studies and found that it reliably raised the threshold at which athletes cramp: "Take it before your event and the probability that you're going to cramp is much lower."

Jeffrey Edwards, an exercise physiologist at Central Michigan University who studies cramps, hasn't seen Flex's data,

but he's intrigued by the model. "We have all kinds of evidence that one set of receptors over here can affect nerve functions somewhere else," he says. Flex hasn't yet published the results of its studies, but Bean presented a summary of the data at the American Academy of Neurology, and a company spokeswoman says the research will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals.

Flex Pharma's supplement will be available early next year. MacKinnon says that it helps prevent cramps for approximately five hours. Just don't expect it to taste like your favorite energy gel. "It's a mix of hot and pungent," MacKinnon says. "That's what makes it work." Flex is also pursuing FDA approval for a drug that would treat cramps associated with multiple sclerosis and ALS, and last winter the company raised \$86 million in an initial public offering. Meanwhile, Bean and MacKinnon continue sea kayaking. Neither has suffered from cramps in years. **O**

Cramp On, Cramp Off

AN ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF BATTLING THE CHARLEY HORSE —P.V.

1930s: A study of men building the Hoover Dam shows that they excrete high levels of salt via sweat. Anecdotally, the workers seem to cramp less after drinking salt water.

1940s: Doctors begin prescribing the antimalarial quinine to relieve cramps.

1965: University of Florida doctors develop an electrolyte- and sugar-heavy drink for the school's football team. The next season, the Florida Gators win the Orange Bowl, crediting Gatorade.

1990s: Multiple studies find no link between cramping and dehydration or electrolyte loss. A theory emerges that attributes athletes' cramps to fatigue.

2006: The FDA advises against quinine for cramping after finding it ineffective and dangerous when taken for extended periods.

2010s: Sports drinks account for \$7 billion in U.S. sales each year; Gatorade continues marketing to "cramp-prone athletes."

2015: Flex Pharma goes public and raises more than \$80 million after announcing that its supplement targets neural pathways associated with cramping.



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Impressive Feet

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by Meaghen Brown

1. Get the Kit

a. Tweezerman Gear Precision Grip toenail clippers

Trim toenails fairly short and straight across—not with the curve of the toe. File edges smooth. \$14; tweezerman.com

b. Lush T for Toes foot powder

While we can't promise that the tea-tree and lime

oils in this absorbent powder will kill stink completely, they'll definitely help. Particularly effective when sprinkled in climbing shoes. \$7; lushusa.com

c. Burt's Bees Peppermint foot lotion

Like Icy Hot for your feet. Cools aches and pains after a long day. \$9; burtsbees.com

2. Get Healed

Blisters are caused by friction. The best defense: make sure your shoes fit and are big enough in the toe box, and always wear high-quality moisture-wicking socks. If you do get one, drain the fluid using a sterilized needle and cover with a cushioned bandage like Spenco's Second Skin blister pads (\$10; spenco.com). Stick a layer of tape over the patch before your next outing.



3. Get Schooled

CODY TOWNSEND Skier

"Usually those weird growths people get on their feet from ski boots aren't from the boots being too tight; it's that they're too loose. If your midfoot isn't secured properly, then your forefoot will ever so slightly rub on pressure points. Clamp down the heel in the back of your boot and lock down your midfoot. It'll prevent your foot from sliding and building up those gnarly bumps."

"A dry foot is one of the best ways to prevent freezing your toes off. Most moisture in your boot comes from your body, not the snow around you." Try

d. Kiehl's Superbly Efficient Anti-Perspirant and Deodorant cream (\$16; kiehls.com).

CEDAR WRIGHT Climber

"One of the worst problems I've dealt with is what I call toe hole: when the space between the pinky and the adjacent digit festers and cracks after being wet. It's remarkably

painful for being such a small, inconsequential area. I've learned to always dry out my feet."

"On any extended hike, wear thick, tightly woven socks."

"On really long routes, bring two pairs of climbing shoes—one larger for easier pitches and a tight-fitting pair for hard stuff."

HAL KOERNER Ultrarunner; owner of Rogue Valley Runners

"When selling shoes at the store, we stress that the foot needs room to swell. Your foot can swell up a whole size during a race, but you should always have lots of room to wiggle in the toe box while staying snug through the instep."

"I roll the undersides of my feet on a tennis ball to work out the plantar fascia."

"When I watch TV, I use toe spacers. They look funny, but the prolonged stretch helps prevent intermetatarsal neuromas, when a nerve between two toes gets enlarged due to repeated compression."

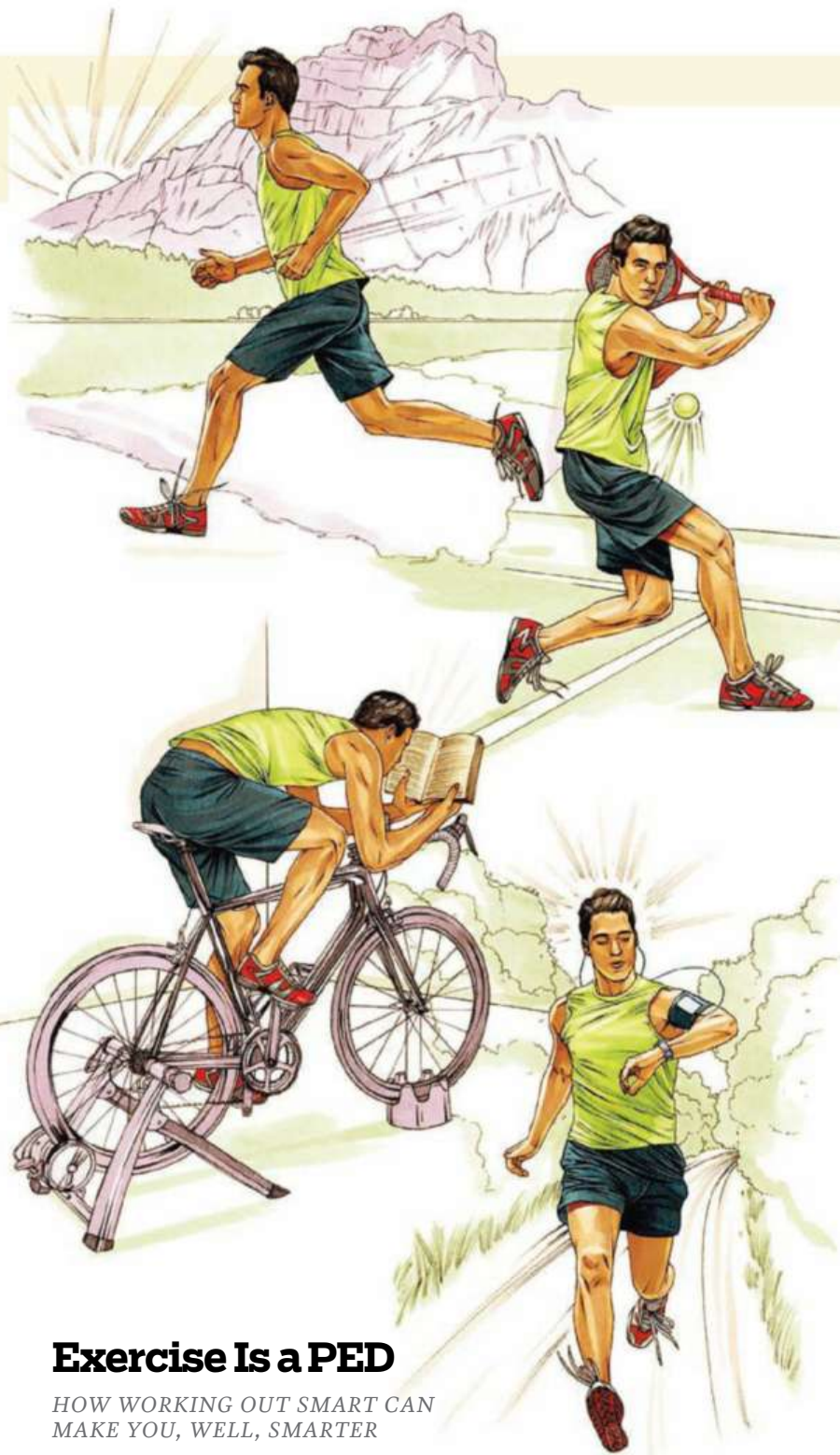
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Exercise Is a PED

HOW WORKING OUT SMART CAN
MAKE YOU, WELL, SMARTER

by Brad Stulberg

FOR YEARS, study after study has shown that a good sweat improves brain function. But what's the optimum dose? Only recently are scientists figuring out the proper prescription and timing necessary to achieve the biggest boost. Following new research out of Stanford University and the Mayo Clinic, companies like Google, Reebok, and the online-coaching platform TrainingPeaks are strategically using physical activity to make employees smarter and more productive.

"They're moving beyond just viewing exercise as something to keep their workforce healthy," says John Ratey, a Harvard psychiatrist and author of *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*. "They realize it's important for performance." Try these four tips to get a bigger cognitive boost from your next workout.

Rise and Shine

Train in the morning, says Ratey, right before you need to be your sharpest. Just 35 minutes of moderately intense running, rowing, or other aerobic exercise primes your brain for peak intellectual performance by balancing neurochemicals that contribute to cognitive functioning. While the benefits of morning exercise linger throughout the day, they are strongest in the 90 to 120 minutes following a workout.

Make it Complicated

Spend more time running trails, mountain biking, and playing tennis, says Ratey. Aerobic sports that require coordination, rhythm, and strategic thinking also promote neurogenesis, or the growth of new brain cells, making you smarter in the long haul.

Multitask

Combining brain and body tasks strengthens the anterior cingulate cortex, one part of the brain associated with perception of effort, making hard work

feel easier, says Samuele Marcora, a physiologist at the University of Kent. The results are long lasting. After, say, repeatedly riding a bike trainer and reading a tricky book simultaneously, both the reading and the biking will seem easier when performed individually.

Microdose

A recent study from Stanford University found that just ten to fifteen minutes of brisk walking can make you significantly more creative—although researchers have yet to pin down the exact reason why. One hypothesis is that the coordination required for walking occupies the brain region responsible for linear thinking, freeing up capacity for creative insight. In fact, anything that gets your heart rate up will increase blood flow to the brain and can provide an uptick in cognition. Ratey suggests strategically timing these mini sessions for the afternoon; research shows that as the day wears on, mental energy gets depleted.

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This Is

10

Letting it
rip at Utah's
Bonneville
Salt Flats
(see page 74)



Do



w you



THAT MENTAL LIST YOU KEEP OF ALL THE FUN THINGS YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE? WE WROTE IT DOWN. THEN WE CAME UP WITH A CHRONOLOGICAL PLAN FOR MAKING IT ALL HAPPEN—IN THE NEXT 365 DAYS.

BY
KATE SIBER



There's no
fun like
four-G fun

SLED LIKE AN OLYMPIAN

📍 LAKE PLACID,
NEW YORK

NOVEMBER–APRIL

\$85 PER RUN

Lolo Jones, the Olympic hurdler turned bobsledder, has described careening down the icy track as similar to being kicked off Mount Everest in a trash can. That's only a slightly hyperbolic way to describe

what it's like to rocket through 12 banked turns going 55 miles per hour at up to four G's. The Olympic Sports Complex in Lake Placid, where American sled teams captured two gold medals, a silver, and a bronze in 1932, is our favorite venue to get a taste of the action, with veteran athletes up front steering while you hold on really, really tight. "A lot of people scream," says Joey Allen, one of the track's regular drivers. whiteface.com

TRIP OUT ON THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

📍 ICELAND

NOVEMBER–MARCH

\$719

A cycle of more intense solar activity has caused the aurora borealis to be at its peak for the past few years, and this winter offers another ideal chance to catch it. Still, you'll need a lot of darkness in a far-north



Icelandic
fireworks

locale—plus a little bit of luck—to witness the spectacle. One of the best spots is Iceland, where Icelandair is offering northern-lights viewing packages that include nonstop flights

FACE YOUR GREATEST FEAR



HEIGHTS

• It doesn't get scarier than **a slackline over a 400-foot-deep chasm**. During Thanksgiving week, a group of Utah highliners and BASE jumpers host an event known as Gobble Gobble Bitches Yeah, in Mineral Bottom Canyon, near Moab. Warm up on a line close to the ground, then don a harness and inch your way across the canyon.

FLYING

• The trick is putting yourself at the controls. Kitty Hawk Kites, a school in Nags Head, North Carolina, offers demo flights in hang gliders over the dunes of Jockey's Ridge State Park, where newbies **soar 15 feet off the ground**. \$99; kittyhawk.com

CONFINED SPACES

• South Dakota's Jewel Cave National Monument, the third-longest cave in the world, is a trove of geological formations. On a ranger-led spelunking tour, **crawl through passages scarcely wider than a basketball**. nps.gov/jeca

HUNGRY BEASTS

• The **great white sharks** that gather in the Farallon Islands, off San Francisco, are up to 20 feet long, thanks to a diet of 5,000-pound elephant seals. See them in their element on a daylong cage-diving trip. \$775; greatwhiteadventures.com

GO IT ALONE



"A solo camping trip is wonderfully peaceful, and it's one of those opportunities we so rarely have to confront our thoughts and anxieties. If it's your first time, pick somewhere that isn't super far off the beaten track. You want trails that are easy to follow, and better signed, so it's harder to get into trouble. Before you set off, seek out people who have some experience, ask them questions, talk through your plans, and make sure you're leaving a detailed itinerary with somebody, so they know if you're overdue. There's a big temptation to do high miles, to bring guidebooks, to identify wildflowers and get into other fun and distracting projects, but personal reflection comes when you're just sitting with nothing to do."

—Jack Haskel, information specialist for the Pacific Crest Trail Association

ENTER THE ULTIMATE RACE

These are the most talked-about events in their respective sports for a reason.

SKI MOUNTAINEERING

Grand Traverse; Crested Butte to Aspen, Colorado, March 25–26

• Teams of two set off at midnight on a 40-plus-mile backcountry route that climbs over 7,800 vertical feet and ends with a 3,200-vertical-foot groomer.

► \$400 per team; elkmountains.traverse.com

ROAD BIKING

Death Ride; Sierra Nevada, California, July 9

• Roughly two-thirds of the 3,500 riders who set out to do the Death Ride every July finish the 129-mile route, which climbs 15,000 feet over five passes.

► \$135; deathride.com

OPEN-WATER SWIMMING

Trans Tahoe Relay; Lake Tahoe, Nevada and California, July 16

• Some 1,400 racers compete in teams of six in this ten-mile crossing of 60-degree-plus Lake Tahoe (no wetsuits allowed), which has become one of the world's largest open-water swims.

► \$600 per team; transtahoerelay.com

TRIATHLON

New York City Triathlon; NYC, July 24

• Swim in the Hudson, bike up and down the West Side Highway, and run through Central

Park in the most urbanized tri in the country.

► \$310; nyctri.com

TRAIL RUNNING

Cranmore Hill Climb; North Conway, New Hampshire, July 10

• Compete with elites at a race that often serves as the U.S. Mountain Running Championships but is open to athletes of all abilities. The course changes every year, but you can expect more than 2,000 vertical feet over about eight miles.

► \$25; whitemountainmillers.com

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Leadville 100; Leadville, Colorado, August 13

• This infamous endurance event follows 100 miles of mixed trails and tops out at 12,400 feet. Too much? Consider the new three-day stage race, which follows the same course at a saner pace.

► \$345; leadville.raceseries.com

OBSTACLE RACING

World's Toughest Mudder; Las Vegas, November

• In the rolling desert outside Sin City, Mudders have 24 hours to make their way through as many laps of the five-mile course as possible, stumbling up wall climbs, off cliff jumps, and through fire lines in pursuit of \$160,000 in prizes.

► \$554; toughmudder.com

from nine North American cities, four nights' lodging, a visit to the mineral-rich Laugarvatn Fontana geothermal baths, and a night-time boat tour, so you can check out the lights from the North Atlantic. icelandair.us

SKI WITH THE BIRDS

📍 SILVERTON, COLORADO

DECEMBER–APRIL

\$179 PER FLIGHT

The epicenter of heliskiing is British Columbia, where a weeklong trip easily costs \$7,000. But you can get a single glory run at Silverton, in the San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado, for less than the price of a couple of lift tickets at Vail. A chopper offers rides to the top of the area's 3,000-foot lines, where a guide leads four skiers

down. When you're done, lap Silverton Mountain's double chair (\$139 guided), which accesses secluded hike-to chutes, bowls, and glades that hold powder for weeks after a storm. silvertonmountain.com

OWN THE GRAND CANYON

📍 ARIZONA

APRIL–MAY, SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER

\$74 FOR A FOUR-NIGHT PERMIT

In the spring and fall, when the hiking highways on the South Rim are mobbed with tourists, the trails on the relatively undeveloped North Rim are blissfully empty. Temperatures hover in the mid seventies, making your lonely descent to the Colorado River even more pleasant. Apply for a back-

country camping permit up to four months in advance for the 11-mile (each way) Nankoweap Trail. It traverses a ledge along a thousand-foot cliff, down steep rock bands, into a canyon, and finally to an ancient granary in an amphitheater on the riverbank. nps.gov/grca

FLOAT YOUR BOAT

📍 MAINE, UTAH, OR OREGON

JUNE–SEPTEMBER

\$125 PER DAY

The number-one reason to put the energy into a DIY river trip instead of opting for an outfitter? "You get to control who you go with," says Mark Singleton, executive director of American Whitewater. A great river to start with is the Allagash, in northern Maine. The section



Guide-free on Maine's Allagash

Telluride's
via ferrata



between Chamberlain Lake and Allagash Village winds 60 miles, with Class II rapids, tree-crammed banks, and an abundance of moose. Nicatou Outfitters will rent you a canoe and supply meals for five days for \$625 (mainecampingtrips.com). Two more challenging DIY options we like: the Grand Ronde, a Class II–III river in Washington and Oregon that slides through basalt cliffs and evergreen forest (raft rentals, \$125 per day from minamraftrentals.com), and the Class III Desolation Gray section of Utah's Green River, for classic

high-desert canyons (raft rentals plus shuttle service, from \$65; riverrunnertransport.com).

LIVE ON THE EDGE

TELLURIDE, COLORADO

JUNE–SEPTEMBER

FROM \$150 FOR A GUIDED TRIP

Via ferratas—climbing routes with metal rungs and cables, first developed by Allied forces in World War I—enable nonclimbers to safely access steep, exposed peaks. Arguably the best one in the U.S. is the via

ferrata in Telluride. Hire a guide from Mountain Trip to show you the way. Or bring your own harness and quickdraws, drive up the Black Bear Pass road from town one switchback past Bridalveil Falls, and locate the well-worn path on the west side of Ajax Peak. The mile-and-a-quarter route leads across airy expanses of rock that in some spots plunge over 400-foot cliffs. Below, a verdant valley dotted with tiny Victorians unfolds, flanked by waterfalls and some of the most rugged peaks you'll find anywhere in the lower 48. *mountaintrip.com*

PLAY JOHN MUIR

BLUE RIVER, OREGON

JUNE–SEPTEMBER

\$400

Muir famously spent hours atop a tree during a winter windstorm in the Sierra Nevada, calling it one of his most exhilarating experiences in the wild. You can have an adventure that's just as powerful, but much more enjoyable, by spending a night in one. Guides from the Blue River–based Pacific Tree Climbing Institute will instruct you on how

TAKE OVER AN ISLAND

Three gems you can have all to yourself.

SPRUCE ISLAND

Maine

• The ultimate New England escape: an 80-acre island, 20 minutes by motorboat from the bustling lobster harbor of Stonington, featuring two stone homes that sleep 18 people and include kayaks, horseshoe pits, beach campfires, and, of course, lobster pots.

► From \$416; homeaway.com

EAGLE ISLAND

Georgia

• Tucked into a marshy coastline, this ten-acre home-stead feels remote, but you'll hardly be roughing it. The three-bedroom main lodge has a king-size loft, an outdoor shower and fireplace, and a hot tub. Fill your days touring the marsh by kayak and catching blue crabs off the dock.

► \$600 per night; privateislandsofgeorgia.com

DEEPWATER ISLAND

Ontario

• A three-bedroom luxury home with a huge deck, a gas grill, a kayak, and two canoes, located on a three-quarter-acre speck of granite in the ultra-clear Georgian Bay, surrounded by the Massassauga Provincial Park. In a word: perfection.

► \$2,500 per week; vrbo.com

CATCH A BUZZ IN THE BACK OF BEYOND

It tastes better when you earn it.



PHANTOM RANCH CANTEN

Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona

Take a 7.8-mile, knee-busting hike down 2,546 vertical feet on the South Kaibab Trail to Phantom Ranch, a collection of 1920s stone and wood cabins. The Canteen sells snacks, first-aid supplies, and, most important, ice-cold Tecate. Warning: last call is at 3:30 P.M.

EBENEZER'S PUB AND RESTAURANT

Lovell, Maine

Lovell isn't on the way to anything except a few White Mountain trailheads, but beer connoisseurs make the pilgrimage to this northern outpost, about 90 minutes by car from Portland, to sample the selection of 35 drafts and 90 bottles, including rare Belgian brews.

GOLDEN SALOON

McCarthy, Alaska

After a week in the bear-thick wilds of Wrangell—St. Elias National Park and Preserve, this watering hole in end-of-the-road McCarthy serving hard-living locals and hard-charging backpackers can seem downright civilized.

to ascend a rope into the upper branches of an old-growth Douglas fir in the Western Cascades. Your bed is a canvas hammock strung between branches, where you'll drift off to the hooting of owls. *pacific treeclimbing.com*

ROLL THROUGH THE BACK-COUNTRY

COLORADO AND UTAH

JUNE–OCTOBER

FROM \$670

Supported hut-to-hut mountain biking gets you into serious wilderness on sensational trails—without the burden of packing all your supplies. The best route in the U.S. is the 215 miles between Durango, Colorado, and Moab, Utah. By day, travel light with only your clothes, snacks, water, and repair kit, choosing between intermediate fire roads and expert singletrack. There are plenty of challenges, from stream crossings to 12,000-foot passes to steep slickrock. Evening brings you to a hut stocked with water, beer, food, sleeping gear, and unobstructed views

of snow-covered peaks. "There's a lot of long-distance riding in the U.S., but this is the only time I felt this level of remoteness," says Sandra Musgrave, a former pro racer from Austin, Texas. The final leg features one of the most celebrated stretches of trail riding in the country—the Whole Enchilada, a forearm-pumping, 7,000-foot technical descent from the top of the La Sal Mountains, down over requisite slickrock, to the Colorado River. *sanjuanhuts.com*

SHUT THE HELL UP

BARRE, MASSACHUSETTS

YEAR-ROUND

FROM \$210

Meditation has become so hip recently that the incessant hype has drowned out the simple fact that learning to sit in calm silence is a transformative skill. Skip the apps and get trained with a crew that's been at it for 40 years. The Insight Meditation Society runs one of the oldest and best centers in the country on a wooded property in central Massachusetts.

Retreats range from two nights to three months, with fees on a sliding scale. *dharma.org*

GET INTIMATE WITH A GRIZZLY

ADMIRALTY ISLAND, ALASKA

JULY–AUGUST

\$475 FOR FLIGHT, \$35 FOR CABIN

Any number of Alaskan outfitters offer day trips to sandbars to watch bears fishing. But you'll have a more memorable

experience if you get two friends to go in on a floatplane charter with Ward Air from Juneau to Admiralty Island, which harbors one of the state's greatest concentrations of brown bears. The six-bunk Admiralty Cove Cabin, one of many simple shelters in the region operated by the U.S. Forest Service, is near a creek overlooking a huge tidal meadow. Bears pack the estuary to gorge on salmon, so they're easy to spot—and decidedly carefree about your presence. *wardair.com; reserveamerica.com*

Alaskan greeting party



TAKE AN UNPLANNED ROAD TRIP



"You need to give it enough time—at least a week. Use your phone only as a camera and music source. I always have a print atlas and the *Gazetteers* for whichever states I'll be in. And when you pack your clothes, cut the pile in half—extra stuff complicates things. Ignore websites and just get on the road and talk to people. You're going to meet a guy in a convenience store who tells you to go to the coolest place, and that'll change your trip. Say yes to absolutely everything. This is about wandering. It's about sitting in the front seat and talking with your best friend—or just staring out the window and doing some thinking. It's about getting a sense of the scale of the country and creating the mental space that you don't have at any other time in your life."
—Brendan Leonard, author of *The New American Road Trip Mixtape*

GO ALL IN

Sometimes blowing your savings or vacation days (or both) is worth it.

LOCK EYES WITH A MOUNTAIN GORILLA

• Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda is easy to access and home to more groups of habituated mountain gorillas than anywhere else on earth. Africa Adventure Consultants leads four-day trips out of Kigali.

► \$1,880; adventures in africa.com

CIRCLE NEW ZEALAND'S SOUTH ISLAND

• A sparse population, alpine peaks, world-class whitewater, paddle-perfect fjords, stunning cycling, and a "freedom camping" ethos that allows you to park your luxury RV rental almost anywhere makes the South Island the premier road-trip destination on the planet.

► \$1,500 for a two-week camper-van rental; mavi.co.nz

CROSS THE OCEAN

• The right way to do it: as part of a sailing crew. Online hubs list openings for sailors on boats making crossings. Many captains don't require extensive experience, and they're happy to offer passage if you're willing to work hard for it.

► Free; oceancrew link.com and float plan.com

Chamonix
beckons

SKI CHAMONIX

• This Swiss mountain town has long been the proving ground for the world's best skiers and mountaineers. Get the most out of it by hiring a guide from the exclusive Compagnie des Guides de Chamonix.

► From \$394 for up to six people; chamonix-guides.eu

GET LOST IN THE AMAZON

• It takes a flight from Cusco, Peru, over the Andes to Puerto Maldonado, followed by eight to ten hours in a motorized canoe, to get to the Tambopata Research Station, a spartan 18-bedroom lodge that houses both travelers and

scientists. The payoff: outside your door is a vast, uninhabited stretch of forest teeming with macaws, capybaras, caimans, and monkeys.

► From \$788 for four days; perunature.com

CHASE SHACKLETON

• Brave the turbulent Southern Ocean on a ship bound for the planet's most remote continent to see spectacular mountain ranges, bizarre ice formations, thousands of seals and penguins, and a landscape legendary for its mesmerizing white enormity.

► From \$7,050 for a ten-day voyage; polar cruises.com

SOAK IN SOLITUDE

📍 FRANK CHURCH RIVER OF NO RETURN WILDERNESS, IDAHO

JULY–SEPTEMBER

FREE

A general rule about hot springs: the harder it is to get to them, the fewer sketchy naked dudes you'll encounter in the water once you get there. Idaho has an abundance of both geothermal activity and remote wilderness, resulting in unsullied spots like Shower Bath Hot Springs in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. To

find them, you'll first need to negotiate the four-wheel-drive-only Sleeping Deer Road, northwest of Challis, then hike 4.5 miles on the steep, occasionally washed-out Mahoney Trail, past the 1910 ranger station, and up a canyon that narrows to the width of a hallway. Stumble through the fast-moving, thigh-high waters of Warm Springs Creek until you arrive at the hallowed place where it rockets out of the hillside and over the canyon lip, creating hot, deep, clear pools of varying temperatures. Chances are, the only sketchy naked dude around will be you.


ALEXANDRE BUISSÉ

SmartLoft

performance anywhere, in any weather



Kalen Thorien, SmartWool Athlete, social media maven and pro skier, admiring a well-earned view in the PhD® Propulsion 60 Hoody Sport.

smartwool. 
Go far. Feel good.™

Photograph by
**PEGGY
SIROTA**

Fanning at
Dana Point,
California, in
September

PUNCH THE SHARK

TAKE IT FROM WORLD-CHAMPION SURFER MICK FANNING: THERE'S A RIGHT TIME FOR WORKING, COMPETING—AND FIGHTING FOR YOUR LIFE

THERE'S NO shortage of life advice these days. Some of it is even valuable. What's harder to find are honest lessons from people who've learned the hard way how to achieve success and happiness no matter what's thrown their way. Take Mick Fanning, current number two on the World Surf League rankings. At 34, the Australian has already lived through more than most. In 1998, he lost his older brother, Sean, to a car accident. Six years later, he ripped his hamstring from the bone while surfing in Indonesia, nearly ending his career before it had really launched. And recently—you and the entire Internet have seen the footage—he fought off a great white shark at Jeffreys Bay, South Africa, on live TV. Through it all, he only seems to get better. He turned a teenage reputation for hard partying into one for maniacal training. During the peak Kelly-Slater-comeback years, he won three world titles, completing dramatic late-season charges at Pipeline for two of them. And yes, he punched a shark. In short, he's a man worth listening to. —MATT SKENAZY

You can plan out so many different things in your life. When something like that shark happens, you wonder, **Am I really into this map that I'm following? Or do I just want to wing it?** I think it was a sign for me to wing it.

Afterward, we had a barbecue at the place I was staying in Jeffreys Bay. I had a lot of good friends around. It was sort of like a wake. **But I was still there.** There would be moments where everyone was laughing, then everyone would be crying.

I lost my brother at an early age, then had a pretty bad injury where I didn't know if I was gonna still have my career. I don't like sympathy. I always think, **It happened, so get on with it and keep moving forward.**

Yeah, I was a bit wild when I was young. **I still enjoy having a good time, it's just more about picking when to do it and when not to do it.** It all changed when I had my injury and had to sit for six months on the sideline. I watched some heats from previous events, and I realized that if I was a little bit more spot-on, then I could've put myself in a better position for a world title. That was the big turning point. Sort of like, OK, you're there to work, so just go to work. You can always play when you're not in work mode.

The 2 A.M. jitters. The little things that keep you up at night and don't let you sleep. These are why you go that extra yard to be a little bit better.

When I was going for my first title, former world champion Mark Richards was giving me advice. He's a hero of mine, and when I was stressing about the competition, he'd always tell me, "Concentrate on yourself. **If you're doing the right job, then you don't have to worry about anyone else.** Let them worry about you."

You just gotta go with your gut.

When you're younger, you base everything around results. Titles aren't the biggest thing in the world anymore. Sometimes we think that our jobs are the most important part of our lives. To tell you the truth, jobs are just something that we do. The main thing is fun. **The smartest people are the ones who give everything up and go hiking or take a long trip.** They always seem to land on their feet.

I see a sports psychologist named Michael Gervais. His motto is "Everything you need is already in you." **You don't have to be superhuman, just be open to searching for what you've already got.**

We spend so much time working on ourselves. **It's sort of stupid if you don't pass the knowledge on to someone.**

My birthday this year was during the event in Fiji. The waves weren't that great, so we thought we'd have a sports day. We played bocce ball and darts and Ping-Pong. **It was good to get rid of the whole competitive-surfing side and just have fun** with a whole bunch of mates you don't go out to dinner with every day.

You need someone pushing you. Joel Parkinson and I have been sparring partners since we were 13. He'd always beat me, and it fired me up. I wouldn't be where I am without him.

Regrets? Not really. You make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. **If you don't make the same mistake twice, then you're learning.**

You can be serious, but is it fun learning? **Is it fun getting better?** Is it fun going through what you need to do to reach different goals in life?

If you're living and breathing, then you've still got a chance. If you've got a chance, you've got to back yourself.

SWIM WITH A MONSTER

📍 BAJA, MEXICO

AUGUST–OCTOBER

\$200 BOAT CHARTER

There's a reason that swimming with whale sharks is on every scuba nerd's bucket list: it's the easiest, safest way to get up close and personal with a creature the size of a school bus. Divers seek out the docile leviathans in tropical waters worldwide, but one of the best spots to see them is Bahia de Los Angeles, just 300 miles south of San Diego down the Baja peninsula. (Schedule two days for the drive—this is Mexico.) Stay at

one of the handful of basic inns or managed campgrounds in town. In the morning, when the water is glassy, hire a local fisherman to bring you and up to seven friends out in a skiff, spot the sharks, and tell you when to jump in. *discoverbajacalifornia.com*

LAND A LUNKER

📍 CENTRAL OREGON

AUGUST–NOVEMBER

\$550 PER DAY

Steelhead are like trout on amphetamines. These famously clever, hard-fighting fish are extraordinarily difficult—and a hell of a lot of fun—to catch.

The Columbia River watershed is a mecca for steelhead fishermen when the fish make their way up rivers to spawn in the winter months. The best way to boost your odds is to hire a

local guide. “We have fish that are so aggressive, they’ll chase a fly for 60 or 80 feet,” says Jeff Perin, owner of Fly Fisher’s Place, an outfitter that runs float trips on the Lower Deschutes

River. Once you hook a fish, it’ll take everything you’ve got to land it. An eight-pound steelhead could easily feel like a 15-pounder as it twists out of the water. *flyfishersplace.com*



In pursuit of Oregon steelhead



Eye to eye with a whale shark

FROM TOP: JUSTIN BAILE; CHRISTIAN VIZ/TADEMI

YOUR
**ADVENTURE
AWAITS**
TOUGH TRUCK TIRES



H/T



A/T



A/T3W
COMING SOON



M/T
COMING SOON

WILDPEAK Tough Truck Tires take you everywhere a new experience awaits, with confidence and comfort.

FALKEN
TIRE
ON THE PULSE

THROW AN OFF-THE-GRID RAGER

New Belgium Brewery, in Fort Collins, Colorado, knows a thing or two about producing outrageous outdoor parties. We asked Jesse Claeys, one of the company's event planners, to share his party-planning tips.

LOCATION IS EVERYTHING

- The ideal spot is bike friendly with a gorgeous view.

GET AHEAD OF THE WEATHER

- We look at average rainfall as well as sunset and sunrise times for certain dates, then plug those into a spreadsheet to find ideal party times.

ACCESSORIZE

- Habitat for Humanity's ReStore (habitat.org) is amazing for cheap furniture and decorations.

DON'T OVERDO THE PLAYLIST

- You just want classic songs that create good background ambience—Budos Band, Sam Cooke, Jimmy Cliff.

ADD A SURPRISE

- We do something called "portaoke"—a karaoke booth among the Porta-Johns. Those kind of strange, unexpected, and interactive moments are what people talk about when it's all over.

Gassing it at Bonneville



DRIVE AS FAST AS YOU CAN

📍 BONNEVILLE
SALT FLATS, UTAH

SEPTEMBER

\$210

Just once, stomp on the gas pedal and hold it there. The World of Speed event, held every September on the Bonneville Salt Flats, a 46-square-mile expanse of featureless salt crust on the western edge of Utah's Great

Salt Lake Basin, invites regular people in regular vehicles to let 'em rip alongside tricked-out racing cars. You get one mile to go as fast as you possibly can. "There's no reference point, and above 100 miles per hour, speedometers

aren't very accurate," says Dennis Sullivan, president of Utah Salt Flats Racing Association. "But you can feel how fast you're going." Chicken out on your first go? No worries—you get five more tries. saltflats.com

CLIMB A RANDOM MOUNTAIN



"This is not a trophy summit that you can brag about at a cocktail party. You're not getting a feather in your cap. This is the essence of climbing—you're doing it because you love the process. It starts with a search for a beautiful mountain that's going to call out to you. You don't always find these things on the Internet. Sometimes it's a little mention in a climbing publication that catches your interest. You go, Oh wow, look at this place that no one goes to. Once I pick a mountain, I do initial research on Google Earth, then figure out how much time I'll need and make a detailed trip plan. Don't let anyone tell you the golden age of exploration is over. There's still a huge supply of peaks that are rarely climbed or have never been climbed."

—Mark Synnott, professional climber and owner of Synnott Mountain Guides

ADAM EWING




THERE IS
JUST AS MUCH MAGIC
OFF THE MOUNTAIN.

Can one town really have it all? Two world-class ski resorts, award-winning dining and a vibrant nightlife, all within one ski-in/ski-out town? Surrounded by a laid-back charm that makes you feel at home? Sure. If you're in Park City, Utah. Here, the Greatest Snow on Earth® is just the beginning. Start at VisitParkCity.com/winter.

park  city

YES. ALL THAT.



**Pics
Or It
Didn't
Happen**

...
@TATUM-
MONOD
UP HIGH IN
ALBERTA
...



If a skier hucks without uploading a photo, does anybody see it? A road trip through the exploding business side of Instagram, where pro athletes roam Alberta stalking the next big trophy shot.

by @graysonschaffer



ONE DRIZZLY day last March in the Canadian Rockies, a group of adventure photographers clustered together around the icy Mistaya River as it flowed through a polished gorge of fluted granite just off Alberta's Icefields Parkway. Kalen Thorien, 27, a Salt Lake City-based skier, stood on a large boulder upstream, her blond ponytail highlighted against an orange

jacket three octaves brighter than a prison jumpsuit. In the foreground, Mistaya Canyon. In the background, jagged mountains swirling in the fog. If there's a recipe to make Instagram, the mobile photo-sharing social network, rain down likes, this was it.

"Little person, big landscape!" said Jimmy Chin, chuckling. This was the phrase we'd begun using to describe the setup that Instagram's animal spirits seem to crave most. Chin is a well-known adventurer, filmmaker, and National Geographic contract photographer. His Instagram account, @jimmy_chin, has an audience of 868,000 (868K in Instagram shorthand), a number that places him at the forefront of a seismic shift in the media world: the rise of individuals as brands unto themselves.

Chin was in Canada on behalf of Travel Alberta, engaging in what has lately eclipsed the commercial catalog shoot, at least among adventure photographers: the well-funded Instagram road trip. Thorien and I had arrived three days earlier and found him in downtown Canmore, soaking wet, at the wheel of a Jeep with a pop-up tent mounted to the roof. He looked exhausted. "How many cameras did you bring?" he asked. He'd spent the morning climbing a melting waterfall with Canmore alpinist Will Gadd, and his only DSLR had soaked through until it fizzled out. We decided to grab beers at the Grizzly Paw Brewing Company and wait for the camera to revive.

Chin is a bit new to the idea of this trip. Rather than the hardcore Himalayan expeditions he's made his name on, he was supposed to round up a gang of friends and do whatever he'd normally do for fun. Travel Alberta would cover everyone's expenses, and Jimmy and the others would each post a photo or so a day, tagging the account @travelalberta, with the hashtag #explorealberta. Which is how we ended up in Mistaya Canyon, Jimmy's Canon magically dried out and working again. With us behind their respective lenses were Callum Snape (@calsnape, 251K), a British national who'd worked at Friends of Banff National Park before discovering his talent for travel photography; Tatum Monod (@tatummonod, 38K), a scion of Banff's oldest skiing family and a top ski-film freeskier; and Chris Jerard, a former *Freeskier* magazine editor who started Inkwell Media, a digital-marketing company that represents Chin and dozens of other individuals with huge online followings, including snowboarder Travis Rice (202K) and photographer Chris Burkard (987K).

Inkwell's clients have a collective audience that is larger than any publication in any of their respective disciplines. That fact is not lost on companies and tourism organizations, many of which have begun pulling money out of traditional agency campaigns and paying Instagrammers to serve as photographer, model, copywriter, and media outlet all in one.

Some companies pay Instagram "influencers," as they are known, to feature their products in photos. Some pay to have their Instagram accounts tagged in photos that promote a certain adventurous lifestyle. For all of them, Instagram represents a guaranteed and verifiable reach for every post—something that

Facebook, Twitter, and most websites can't offer. That's because Instagram, unlike other social-media sites, still shows your posts to all your followers. (Facebook shows them to only a small subset, and Twitter's pace is so frenetic that people miss many posts.) Nothing delivers more likes than Instagram. "Our brand awareness seems to be growing by 15 to 25 percent per month since we started using Instagram as our primary form of advertising," says Alan Yiu, creative director of Westcomb, an outdoor-apparel brand in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The biggest names in adventure sports, stars like Kelly Slater (1.2M) and Lindsey Vonn (448K), use their social-media reach to negotiate contracts with sponsors. Others use their channels on a prorated basis. Pro surfer Anastasia Ashley (978K) says she enters into short-term partnerships to put together shoots with production costs running to five figures. "I can make a video of my foot that 100,000 people will watch," says the 28-year-old Californian, "or I can produce something high-end." (Full disclosure: I've gotten swept up in it, too. In April, I partnered with Ryan Heffernan, a longtime friend and commercial photographer in Santa Fe, to start a small agency called Talweg Creative that services the New Mexico Tourism Department.)

Not so long ago, the pathway to success for athletes was built around winning contests, planning big expeditions, and cultivating years-long relationships with a single brand. Now all that's been swept away by a new form of self-promotion, one that displays a highly curated and idealized version of our everyday lives.

AMONG OUR LITTLE crew, it was mostly just fun. The plan was to ski at the Lake Louise Ski Resort and in the sprawling, glaciated backcountry beyond. But it hadn't snowed much of late, and the winter was unusually warm.

So while our guides worked hard to sniff out cold snow in secret stashes, we headed north toward Jasper, with all that landscape spilling by. Inside the corridor of mountains that straddles British Columbia and Alberta, an hour west of Calgary, there are five national parks. Along Icefields Parkway alone, there are dozens of scenic roadside vistas—mountains, waterfalls, elk herds, and the Athabasca Glacier, billed as "one of the world's most accessible."

A half-mile from the parking lot, where a fleet of tour buses with monster-truck tires drive out onto the glacier, we found a Fortress of Solitude-style ice cave in translucent blue that could perfectly frame a small figure. It wasn't really a destination so much as a backdrop. But that's what people are into.

Instagram culture is actually changing the way people travel and plan their trips. Instead of thinking about the experiences they want to have, people are thinking about what the photos they want to post. It's like that old joke: Did you have fun on your vacation? I don't know, I haven't developed the film yet.

"It's becoming a problem," joked Jessica Harcombe Fleming, the representative from Travel Alberta who organized the trip. "People will call us and ask whether there are hotels or restaurants here, because all they see is these little figures and big mountains."

Paul Zizka (50K), another photographer based in Banff, worries about what the trend does to creativity. "Why is everybody coming



Instead of thinking about the experiences they want to have, people are thinking about the photos they want to post. It's like that old joke: Did you have fun on your vacation? I don't know, I haven't developed the film yet.





❤️💬 @kalenthorien

❤️💬 @jimmy_chin





@KALENTHORIEN
ON BOW LAKE

here and shooting the exact same trophy shots?” he asked when we spoke by phone. “Ninety-nine percent of the images come from the same ten locations.”

On one hand, Instagram democratizes the photographic business, allowing talented people to find clients based on their skills rather than which editors they know. Snape’s career, for instance, was jump-started when an image of two elk crossing some railway tracks was picked up on National Geographic’s Your Shot website. But it has also created a culture in which photographers and athletes are valued by the number of followers they have rather than their aesthetic or skill. In fact, Instagram can reinforce your worst habits as a shooter by rewarding you—sometimes handsomely—for producing treacle. Instagram loves sunsets, the Milky Way, and the stuff of inspirational posters.

“
Waves of clouds came and went, occluding and revealing Crowfoot Mountain. We shot all of it, a scene that’s painfully beautiful and yet constantly at risk of becoming a simulacrum.

ABOUT A TWO-HOUR ski into the mountains, the husband-and-wife guiding team of Craig McGee and Lindsay Andersen found several northeast-facing couloirs that had blown in deep. We wallowed up a narrow slot off Surprise Pass, above the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise. Craig

and Lindsay liked what they saw of the snowpack—locked in and unlikely to slide—so they gave us the green light. Boot-packing up a fresh couloir can feel as awkward as swimming in mashed potatoes. But we were rewarded with beautiful turns down a 45-degree hallway of rock and snow.

On our second day, we headed out Icefields Parkway in search of

was rainy and nasty, and ultimately the plan that won out didn’t involve a mountain at all. We backtracked to Bow Lake, a scenic spot surrounded by jagged peaks, and built a campfire on the ice to sit around while eating our bag lunches—checking the box for another classic shot. A group of climbers guided by legendary Canadian alpinist Barry Blanchard, 56, happened to be setting out on skis across the lake in hopes of climbing Mount Baker, on the Wapta Icefield. Waves of clouds came and went, occluding and revealing Crowfoot Mountain, which sits at the bend that gives Bow Lake its name. We shot all of it, a scene that’s painfully beautiful and yet constantly at risk of becoming a simulacrum.

Jimmy ended up posting about a dozen shots from our trip on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, reaching, Inkwell calculated, a potential ten million people. The rest of us posted 39 photos, reaching maybe one million. The afternoon before we departed, we arrived back in Lake Louise to find Chris Burkard, the photographer, and a crew from the Swedish adventure-clothing maker Fjällräven planning a shoot at the Assiniboine Lodge, a backcountry inn beneath its namesake mountain, which bears a passing resemblance to the Matterhorn.

One thing they wanted to know: Was Thorien available to model for the week? She’d injured her knee in a car accident in January and had been unable to ski for most of the winter. So she needed the work.

“How much do you think I should charge?” she asked me. For the past few years, she’d been pulling espressos in Salt Lake City and fighting wildfires for \$11.40 an hour.

Maybe a grand? I said.

She more than doubled it. Fjällräven agreed. And just like that, another flourishing Instagram career was born.

GRAYSON SCHAFFER (@GRAYSONSCHAFFER, 15K) WROTE ABOUT CONRAD ANKER IN JULY.

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Photo: Kaori Funahashi

outsidetv.com



Roger Mann
sets out
from
Victoria,
British
Columbia

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL HANSON

The G R E A T E S T b o a t *Race* E V E R *DREAMED UP OVER BEERS*

THE RULES: Pilot a boat 750 miles from Port Townsend, Washington, to Ketchikan, Alaska no motors allowed.

THE PRIZE: \$10,000 nailed to a piece of wood.

THE RESULT: Seven capsizings, four lifesaving Big Macs, one dramatic coast guard rescue, and a cast of oddball adventurers who reclaimed the salty heart of ocean racing.

BY ABE STREEP

ON A CONCRETE RAMP near the pier in Port Townsend, Washington, Alan Hartman pulls on his eye patch. It's uncomfortable, but the doctors say it's necessary to keep salt water out of his right cornea, which the 47-year-old fisherman recently speared while chainsawing brush near his remote Alaska cabin.

He drove himself an hour to the nearest hospital, where he encouraged doctors to cut out the eye so he could make it into a necklace, but ten stitches saved his sight. Hartman hauls his boat, a 18-foot trimaran, down to the beach and squeezes his rain-barrel torso into the two-foot-wide cockpit. He dips a paddle into Port Townsend Bay and raises a flimsy sail. His tent and sleeping bag are strapped to the hull without any weather protection. He is resolute that neither his wound nor some wet nights' sleep will keep him from the journey ahead. "This race is going to change my life," he says.

It's 4:30 A.M. on June 4. The predawn light slowly turns the sky from charcoal to slate, revealing clouds on the water and a total of 53 vessels making final preparations for today's 40-mile crossing of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the first leg of a 750-mile quest that will conclude in Ketchikan, Alaska.

The teams have 36 hours to reach Victoria, British Columbia. Those who make the cutoff will continue racing up the coast. The boats that take too long or require assistance will be disqualified. There are small boats, big boats, strange boats, solo racers, and crews of up to six men and women, all competing under a chosen team name. Six Canadian rowers are Team Soggy Beavers. Alan Hartman opts for the more literal Team Hartman. Three sailors on a lightweight carbon-fiber trimaran call themselves Team Elsie Piddock, after a children's-book character. The name may be tame, but the crew is not: their captain is Al Hughes, a Seattle sailor with immense hands who lives on a boat and has completed three solo races across the Pacific. He stands aboard his vessel in a drysuit, sizing up the field. Looking around, he is amazed at the motley fleet assembled.

Of some concern to Hughes is a shining 22-foot catamaran emblazoned with the Stars and Stripes and the Sperry Topsider logo. It's crewed by Team FreeBurd: Tripp

and Chris Burd, 31- and 27-year-old brothers who live in the sailing mecca of Newport, Rhode Island, and look like they just stepped out of an Abercrombie ad. Tripp, who has swept-back blond hair and a square jaw, has predicted that they will complete the opening leg "by breakfast."

Nearby, George Corbett and Mike McCormack, thirtysomething buddies from Squamish, British Columbia, are futzing with their neon yellow 17-foot trimaran. Corbett, a thin engineer with a crew cut, and McCormack, a long-haired sailing guide, found it on a beach in Mexico, full of sand, after a hurricane. It's a foiling boat, like the ones used in the most recent America's Cup, meaning that when it catches enough wind, a submerged hydrofoil elevates the hulls out of the water, reducing drag and radically increasing speed. This one, however, is rather spindly and not intended for open-water odysseys. Looking at it, Al Hughes is dubious about its chances. But the guys are bullish. They have dubbed themselves Team SeaWolf, after the legendary predator that feeds on salmon up the British Columbia coast.

About 20 yards down the beach, a small crowd hovers around another 17-foot catamaran that looks as though it was inspired by the *Millennium Falcon*. The hulls are made from recycled plywood; the foam inside came from a dumpster. In the cockpit is a pedal drive assembled from old bike parts. The tiller is made of bamboo purchased on Craigslist and lashed together with bike tubes. On the bow sits a piece of amber of the sort that Vikings used to take to war. The creators of the vessel are two boat-building aficionados from Seattle: Thomas Nielsen, 53, a medical consultant with pipe-cleaner eyebrows, and Scott Veirs, a 45-year-old marine biologist. Calling themselves Team Sea Runner, they are out to prove that money and technology do not always rule the day.

Nielsen and Veirs take a long look at the

weather report. It is, in a word, bad. A westerly wind has been blowing at 30 knots all night, forming steep six-foot waves. They decide to swap out their mainsail for a smaller one. This is a delicate matter, because the sails—which are cut into crab-claw shapes inspired by ancient Polynesian vessels—are made of simple tarps, and the mast is constructed from an old windsurfing spar and more bamboo. Veirs, a soft-spoken father of two with calves the size of fire extinguishers, delicately hops on board and says, "This is a good boat to learn to sail on, if you're in Polynesia."

Next to them sits a small red Hobie Cat trimaran piloted by Roger Mann, a laconic South Carolina jet mechanic who recently taught himself to sail. He calls himself Team Discovery. He had his boat shipped from a factory directly to Port Townsend; upon opening the boxes, two days ago, he nearly cut off his left index finger, then stitched the digit up himself with his suture kit. He now sits on his boat in a drysuit, calmly eating freeze-dried rice and beef.

The light comes up, and boats push into the bay. At 5 A.M. a foghorn blows. Team FreeBurd tears off in a patriotic blur. Team Elsie Piddock soon catches them. Onshore, someone plays the Soviet national anthem over loudspeakers. Once Team Sea Runner is finally ready, around 6:30, Nielsen puts on a rubber mask adorned with a serpent and starts screaming "Snake face! Snake face!" as he pedals into the maelstrom. Frustrated by limited peripheral vision, Alan Hartman removes his eye patch, baring the pink

Clockwise from top left: The start at Port Townsend; race director Jake Beattie; Team Sea Runner's pedal drive; Tripp and Chris Burd; George Corbett of Team SeaWolf; Team Grin's Hannah Viano; Thomas Nielsen and Scott Veirs of Team Sea Runner; fans; the tireless Roger Mann



fury of his cornea. For about 90 minutes, masts of every shape and color hobby-horse over the horizon. Then the first SOS call comes in.

WELCOME to the inaugural Race to Alaska. Billed as “the Iditarod with a chance of drowning,” the race is designed to reclaim the raw, salty heart of ocean competition from the billionaires who dominate technofied events like the America’s Cup. The rules are simple: captain a boat from Port Townsend to Ketchikan along the Inside Passage of British Columbia, with no motors and no support. Don’t get eaten by a bear. The first boat wins \$10,000 cash. The runner-up gets a set of steak knives.

Like any good boondoggle, this one was conceived over beer. It was during Port Townsend’s Wooden Boat Festival in September 2013, and Jake Beattie was having a cold one.

Port Townsend is a town of 9,200 at the northeastern corner of the Olympic Peninsula. Residents are a mix of retirees who have realized the American dream and younger people who appear uninterested in doing so. What unites the place is a love for boats. You can’t lower a boom in PT without hitting someone who builds, repairs, or resides on some small wooden vessel.

Beattie, 39, grew up in nearby Bellingham, taught for Outward Bound, and cut his teeth as first mate on the *Bounty* a decade before it sank in Hurricane Sandy. He was now heading up the Port Townsend-based Northwest Maritime Center, a nonprofit that educates people about traditional seafaring.

He was relaxing in a festival beer tent, talking with friends about seizing the proverbial day. In the past five years, wooden boats had enjoyed a popularity surge, a maritime answer to beekeeping and backyard farming. Port Townsend’s Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding had a wait list, and trade publications like *Small Craft Advisor* were thriving. This in spite of—or maybe in response to—the age of Instagram and Twitter.

The group started to talk about ocean races. As far as Beattie was concerned, the greatest one happened back in 1968, when Britain’s *Sunday Times* sponsored the Golden Globe Race, an around-the-world challenge that attracted every nutjob on water: Nigel Tetley, a South African who sank; Donald



Attrition set in early. Angus, the ringer, failed to secure his boat to his trailer, and it tumbled off outside Seattle. The paddleboarder was concussed by a falling tree in a Missouri suburb. Hartman impaled himself in the eye.

Crowhurst, a Brit who’d joined the race to buoy his failing business, then faked his position and disappeared; and Beattie’s hero, Frenchman Bernard Moitissier, who, while leading the fleet, came to the realization that the seas shouldn’t be commercialized and promptly rerouted to Tahiti. Since then? Carbon fiber, GPS, Larry Ellison, the NASCARification of sailing.

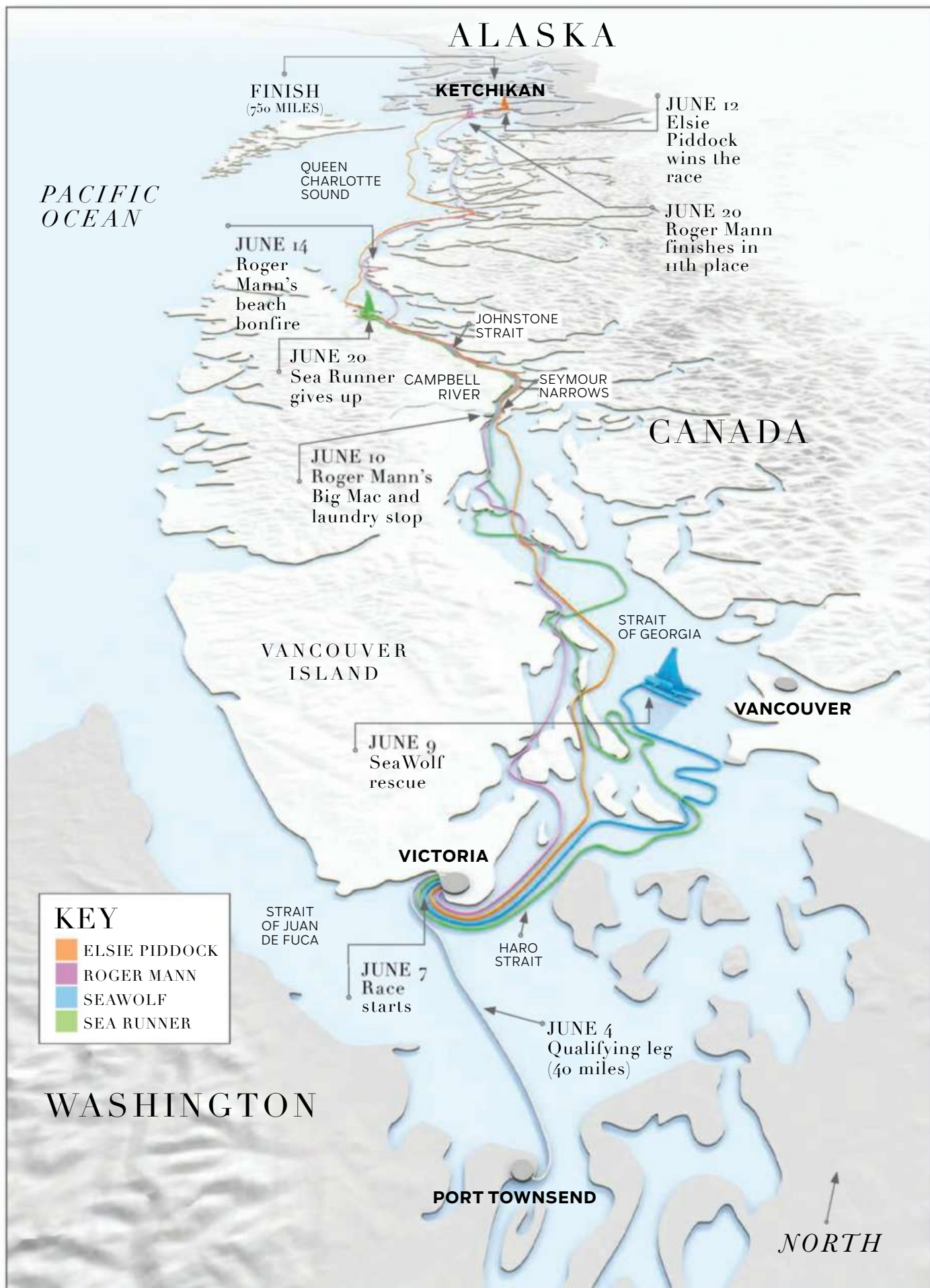
Beattie took a sip and cracked an expression that he often wears, the half grin of a man who is surprised that the authorities have not yet discovered his most recent prank.

His exact words remain a matter of some debate, but this was the gist: “What if we nailed ten grand to a tree in Ketchikan?”

The conversation stopped—and then resumed with a collective *hell yes*. Despite the spontaneous nature of the proposal, the race route was actually a calculated choice. The Inside Passage to Alaska is a 750-mile labyrinth of open straits, tidal channels, boat-eating shoals, and fast-flowing ocean rivers. It’s often dead calm, perfect for rowboats. Periodically, though, it offers up hellacious headwinds. The tides flow at four, five, sometimes eight knots. Miss an ebb and you might get dragged backward; catch one and you’re in a fast lane full of deadheads, great bundles of waterlogged timber that lurk just under the surface. Beattie decided to hold the race in June, when the weather is normally calm but also occasionally not. With good winds, a fast boat would make the trip in a week. With no wind, it could take a month of rowing or pedaling. This would create a nautical Rubik’s Cube, a problem designed to spur the kind of ingenuity that’s gone the way of the sextant.

Now Beattie just needed participants, prize money, and enough cash for incidentals like emergency SPOT satellite trackers, which would connect racers to search and rescue networks and allow fans to follow the competition online. Crowdsourcing was the obvious choice, but Beattie eschewed Facebook and frequently claimed that his cell phone lacked messaging capabilities. Still, he made a Kickstarter video to raise \$10,000—the prize. The video showed someone nailing cash to a tree and blowing a horn, a siren call to the tribe.

The tribe didn’t immediately beat down the doors. The first registered competitor was Mann, the South Carolina jet mechanic. So Beattie cajoled his friend Colin Angus, a record-setting ocean rower based in Victoria, to sign up, attaching a name to the race. This prompted the Pacific Northwest’s oceangoing set to pay heed, and soon the fleet filled out with ex-Olympians, a septuagenarian former Peace Corps volunteer, veteran ocean rowers, one liver-transplant recipient, two organic farmers, and a midwestern paddleboarder who intended to sleep on shore in his drysuit. A children’s-book author named Hannah Viano signed on after noting





the disappointing lack of women in the race, joining a newly engaged couple who work on Antarctic research vessels. Veirs and Nielsen, Team Sea Runner, set upon a rigorous sleep-deprivation training program, as well as hypothermia-endurance sessions in Puget Sound in January. Alan Hartman paid the \$650 entry fee in beaver pelts.

Given the fleet's diversity of experience, Beattie decided to separate the wheat from the chaff in a supported opening leg of the race, the challenging daylong crossing from Port Townsend to Victoria. Competitors would be accompanied by search and rescue teams. After that the safety net would fall away; so, the thinking went, would much of the fleet.

Attrition set in early. Angus, the ringer, failed to secure his boat to his trailer while driving to the race's start, and it tumbled off somewhere outside Seattle. The organic farmers bailed; something came up. The paddleboarder was concussed by a falling tree in a Missouri suburb. Hartman impaled himself in the eye. He at least stayed in, proclaiming, "I can't pull a Palin."

THE FIRST SOS turns out to be a red herring—a sailor whose SPOT tracker momentarily turns off, freaking everyone out.

The second comes in at around 8 A.M. and is real. The victims, a duo on a fast catamaran who met just days before the race, have not yet left Port Townsend Bay when their mast crashes down due to a loose turnbuckle. They limp onto a beach, arguing as they drag their boat across kelp beds. The first mate, a kayaking guide, hitchhikes back to town. She will later publicly accuse her captain of a number of charges, including wearing sweatpants during the race (true), towing his boat to the starting line with a Prius (also true), and entering the race under an alias (unverifiable). One down.

Thirty minutes later, a former U.S. Marine in a solo kayak starts taking on water and steadily sinking. A support boat arrives to save him, and another vessel hauls the waterlogged kayak back to Port Townsend.

George Corbett and Mike McCormack of Team SeaWolf are flying along in their foiling boat, making a beeline for Victoria, when their mainsail tears off, forcing McCormack

to power them the last seven miles using the craft's pedal drive. By the time they arrive in Canada, Team FreeBurd has long since finished breakfast.

Meanwhile the half-blind Alaskan endures. For about six hours and 20 miles, Hartman bashes through the choppy waves by paddling, but around 11:30 A.M. the tide shifts and starts flowing south. This, in tandem with the wind, creates big breakers, which repeatedly flood his boat. The first time he capsizes, he doesn't see it coming. One moment he's riding a wave, the next he's in the drink. He wiggles out of his seat and puts all his weight on one of his extended pontoons, righting the ship. His tent and sleeping bag are gone. His primary concern, though, is getting back on board before anyone sees him—aid from a support vessel means instant disqualification. He hops back in and discovers that he has busted his rudder cables. He paddles for Protection Island, a spit of bird-inhabited land at the southern end of the strait, where he strips down and dries off.

A few hours later, he sets back out with no steering. He capsizes for the second time,



Over the next week, Mann loses track of the days. Hallucinations set in—trees, mostly, but also a barrel of laughing monkeys and a supermarket full of Mountain Dew. He ties up to a kelp bed, gets lost in the fog.

miles from Victoria, they suddenly start moving backward—a flooding tide. The guys try to tack out to sea, but the current gets stronger. Around 7:30, they pull up to a rocky beach at the far eastern edge of Vancouver Island, just before getting flushed clear to Washington State. They are tying up to a kelp bed, preparing to spend the night, when a small yacht approaches and a white-haired man calls out: “How you doing?”

It’s Veirs’s dad, Val, who has been following them on the race tracker on the Race to Alaska’s website, along with some eight million other fans. Nielsen hisses, “They can’t help us.”

They chat briefly, then Dad motors off and Nielsen remembers something. He sailed these waters back when he was a twenty-something hotshot with the Canadian coast guard. There’s a sheltered route around the back side of a small island—he once wrecked a girlfriend’s boat there. The guys pedal into a calm channel. Eagles flap above abandoned beaches; seals play in the shallows. The falling sun seems to take Nielsen’s competitive fire with it. “Why,” he asks, “would you race through waters like these?”

GEORGE CORBETT of Team SeaWolf stands shirtless on the dock in Victoria, a wild grin on his face and a cigarette in his mouth. Piles of ramen noodles lie at his feet. It’s two nights after the qualifying leg, the eve of the real race. Tomorrow he’s going to quit smoking. Tonight he’s lighting new cigarettes with the ends of old ones.

The 28 teams that survived the qualifying stage are all moored in Victoria’s well-appointed harbor, surrounded by food carts and buskers. When an onlooker approaches Corbett to ask about the boat’s foiling system, he points to McCormack, his long-haired and tattooed partner, who is messing with a tangle of rigging. “It’s like spaghetti,” Corbett says. “Stick a fork in and twirl. See what you get.”

McCormack works away silently. They

rights the boat, and makes for a beach. He gathers himself, launches, and capsizes a third time. He limps to shore, calls race command on his radio, and says, matter-of-factly, “It’s beyond my ability and safety zone to continue.” He will spend two weeks in the village of Sequim, working on a farm to raise funds to get back to Alaska.

Throughout the morning, Team Sea Runner flops gently over the waves in their science experiment. Rescue boats motor up, especially after Nielsen makes the decision to detour 15 or so miles around Protection Island, but he brushes off the assistance vessels with friendly banter. Then the team’s radio crackles: headquarters. “Team Sea Runner,” says a voice. “Team Sea Runner, please respond.”

Nielsen tries to reassure them, but the channel seems jammed up.

“Fuck ‘em,” he says, stowing the radio. “They don’t need to know what’s going on.”

Around 1 P.M. he looks at his iPhone, tracking the other teams’ progress. Most have already made the crossing.

He says, “They’re all thinking, *Those guys*

Opposite, clockwise from right: Team Elsie Piddock; Victoria entertainment; rescue boat. This page, clockwise from top left: Mike McCormack of Team SeaWolf; Scott Veirs of Team Sea Runner; Team Barefoot Wooden Boats; the Burd brothers.

have tarp sails, they’ll never make it. I don’t care. They have high-tech stuff. But if it breaks, they can’t jury-rig it!”

It doesn’t take acute powers of deduction to see that Nielsen thinks he can win this thing, passing all those shining tris and cats as they beg for tows in some haggard cove. He has everything planned in granular detail, from daily calorie targets (6,000, much of it in salted olive oil) to defecation strategies (a canvas funnel). That amber Viking warrior stone? It belongs to Nielsen.

Veirs, on the other hand, isn’t feeling particularly competitive. He is more interested in exploring the coast and discussing the philosophy of Polynesian watercraft. Soon after Nielsen’s rant, Veirs offers up a contemplative discourse on orca biology.

At about 6 P.M., when they’re just a few

have repaired the mainsail that tore on the crossing from Port Townsend, but there's still much to be done: food to pack and rigging to fix. "Shit show," explains Corbett succinctly. It will take well into the night. But then Corbett stomps out his cigarette and abruptly announces that he has scored a Tinder date with a cute Victoria neuroscientist. "She cuts open mouse brains and shit," he says. "I gotta go." He shakes his head, apologizes to McCormack, and leaves.

Nearby, Tripp Burd stands by his catamaran, looking far less confident than he did in Port Townsend. The brothers made the crossing to Victoria in just over four hours, coming in second. But last night, all qualifying racers attended a mandatory safety briefing by the Canadian coast guard's regional search and rescue supervisor, Susan Pickrell, a no-nonsense woman who noted that there's only one rescue chopper for the

tie sounds a horn, and the crews run down to their boats. Team Sea Runner is first off the dock. The real race is on.

IT'S ALWAYS dead calm before a gale.

For the first few hours following the departure, there's no wind and the fleet sticks together, inching north through Haro Strait to the town of Sidney, where the Gulf Islands create a maze of small channels that present the first opportunity to choose your own adventure.

Everyone has the same goal: to reach the town of Campbell River, 120 miles up the Strait of Georgia and roughly one-fifth of the way to Ketchikan, by Monday evening, the second night out of Victoria. That's when an ebbing tide will push through Seymour Narrows, a churning ocean river that feeds into the second major test of the course, Johnstone Strait. The boats that make the

sees humpbacks feeding near Saturna Island. The biologist smiles and follows them north into the Strait of Georgia. Then the wind dies. Dead calm.

Suddenly, a fierce headwind kicks up from the north. It gets dark, clouds obscuring the moon. The waves grow to six feet. Veirs tries to pound upwind, but a gust rips off the boat's larger tarp sail and it falls on Nielsen's head. He springs up and stands on the bow, boat rocking in the waves. He has a plan: "Scott, I'm going to stand here while you stand on my wrists and raise the other sail!"

Veirs furls the fallen sail, grabs the smaller one, and jumps up onto his partner's forearms. Somehow they don't buck off the boat, and Veirs manages to rig up the sail.

About this time, Team FreeBurd is 20 miles north, charging through the strait. Their catamaran climbs up one wave and dives five feet into the trough of the next. A cylindrical shape flashes in the bioluminescence directly off the bow: a log the size of a telephone pole. The impact sounds like a gunshot. The brothers limp to a protected cove, where they discover that their hull survived. They put on a smaller reef sail and set back out. It promptly tears off twice in a row.

Team Elsie Piddock, meanwhile, cruises on. By Monday afternoon, Al Hughes and crew have reached Campbell River. They fly through Seymour Narrows on an ebbing tide, leaving the fleet in their wake. "The rich," Hughes will explain later, invoking a sailor's favorite cliché, "got richer."



Team Elsie Piddock captain Al Hughes



Alan Hartman

whole coast. "So if you think a helicopter is going to fly out and come pluck your ass out of the water, it's not gonna happen," she said. She also added that survival time without a drysuit could be up to three and a half hours, depending "on how fat you are and how much will you have to live."

Tripp now looks like a kid deeply out of his element. He and his brother have done multi-day races before, but that was in Florida, and hotels were involved. Their initial plan for this event was to sail all day and night, but other competitors have warned them about the dangers of speeding through log-filled channels in the dark. Now they're planning to anchor in coves at night and sleep in drysuits on their tarpaulin. Their boat has no other shelter. "I'm scared to death," he says.

The next day, Sunday, June 7, the 68 racers gather at noon near a statue of Captain Cook—an inauspicious icon, maybe, but the only one available. It's a LeMans start. Beat-

Monday evening tide at Seymour Narrows should be the ones to beat, soaring west and then north into open waters while the rest wait eight hours for the tide to shift again.

How they get to the narrows, though, is a matter of choice. When the leaders of the fleet reach Sidney, in front is Team Soggy Beavers in their rowboat, followed by a scrum of boats. Then a gentle southerly picks up, allowing the bigger boats to unfurl their sails. The fleet splinters.

Team Elsie Piddock flies out in front, followed by Team FreeBurd. Hughes's plan is to stay in the calmer waters to the west of the Gulf Islands, then duck out into the open Strait of Georgia as late as possible, since the forecast is calling for headwinds starting at midnight.

A few teams opt to head into the Strait of Georgia early, Sea Runner among them. Around 10:30 P.M. on Sunday, Veirs is at the helm, cruising along into the sunset, when he

AT THE SAME TIME, the poor are getting poorer. By Monday afternoon, while Elsie Piddock shoots through Seymour Narrows, the rest of the fleet is scattered throughout the Gulf Islands, seeking shelter. FreeBurd is one of many teams repairing wind-ruined rigging in the various marinas that dot Vancouver Island's coast. Mann, the solo South Carolinian, pilots his Hobie through the quieter inland waters, making slow, steady progress. Team SeaWolf, meanwhile, decides to gamble.

They entered the Strait of Georgia on Sunday night, within sight of three other boats. But by Monday afternoon they're alone; the others have all reconsidered their routes or bailed from the race completely.

But the way the Squamish boys figure it, you can't foil without wind, so they decide to stay in open water. At about 6 P.M. Monday, the 25-knot gusts lie down, and Corbett sets a northwesterly bearing. Then the wind picks back up. Hard. By midnight it's gusting to 30 knots from the northwest, pushing against the tide. The waves are so steep, Corbett can't tack safely. Soon he's heading southeast, toward the **continued on page 108**



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Earle at Deep Ocean Engineering and Research, the submersible company she founded in 1992, in Alameda, California

EARLE RILEY POW ER

By
**IAN
FRAZIER**

Photograph by
**ALEX
FARNUM**

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MARINE BIOLOGIST SYLVIA EARLE HAS DONE THINGS IN THE OCEAN THAT WOULD SCARE MOST PEOPLE SENSELESS. SHE'S BEEN ALONE IN TOTAL DARKNESS THOUSANDS OF FEET DOWN, HOVERED UNDER A RUSSIAN SHIP AS IT PINGED HER MINI SUBMARINE, AND BEEN CHARGED BY HUGE SHARKS. BUT ONE THING DOES FRIGHTEN HER: THE DIRE STATE OF OUR OVERFISHED AND POLLUTED SEAS, SOMETHING SHE SPENDS EVERY WAKING HOUR TRYING TO CHANGE.

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ALMOST THE FIRST thing Sylvia Earle said to me was, “The oceans are dying.”

We were at a small dinner in Manhattan last fall, celebrating the New York premiere of a documentary about her called *Mission Blue*. As the world’s best-known oceanographer—Sylvia is to our era what Jacques Cousteau was to an earlier one—she feels a heavy responsibility. In her lifetime, she has seen the ocean damaged in ways humans never thought it could be. The ongoing disaster leaves her mournful, desolate, and sometimes scary to talk to. Since her first dive, in a sponge-diver’s helmet in a Florida river when she was 16, she has spent 7,000 hours, or the better part of a year, underwater. In the depths, swordfish and bioluminescent fish and humpback whales in mid-song have swum by her, done a double take, and stopped to check her out. From her life’s experience, she has become no longer really terrestrial. She is like a super-apex sea creature that has somehow wound up on dry land and is walking around and telling everybody about the terminal ruin humans are inflicting on her home.

Every day more signs appear that seem to prove her dire predictions right. She sees portents of human beings’ alteration of the oceans visible to no one else. Our leavings are now everywhere: she knows that off California, about 10,500 feet down, a solitary white plastic patio chair sits on the bottom as if its occupant had just gotten up to turn the steaks. She watches sea life being destroyed from every direction, between overfishing and pollution and rising temperatures, with the ocean’s chemistry going to hell and reef paradises that she used to love now dead and rotting. As Pope Francis noted in his recent encyclical on climate change, “Coral reefs comparable to the great forests on dry land ... are already barren or in a state of constant decline.” Sylvia began warning about that nightmare decades ago.

Last May, a small story on page six in *The New York Times* reported that Chinese ships, as observed by Greenpeace, had been



Earle during the 1970 Tektite II project, in which she and four other women scientists lived in an underwater capsule in the U.S. Virgin Islands for two weeks

fishing illegally off the west coast of Africa. The coastal waters of China have been so gravely depleted that Chinese vessels must now go much farther from home. Off Africa, their bottom-trawling methods ripped up the ocean floor and took fish without regard for limits or species, Greenpeace said. China responded by saying that its ships provided fees and other benefits to the African countries in whose waters they fished. The observed offenses occurred at the same time that some of those countries were in near chaos, fighting the Ebola virus. This story, we may imagine, contains a sketch of the future that Sylvia is talking about.

When the adventurer Thor Heyerdahl crossed the Pacific by raft in 1947, he saw no trash. Today, garbage patches the size of small countries rotate in the centers of various oceans. A study of ocean trash in 2009 found that cigarette butts were the most common debris, with plastic bags second. Of unknown danger are the much smaller pieces of plastic that infuse the seas and probably will forever. Marine animals ingest plastic fragments and die. Lost or discarded nylon fishing nets and monofilament longlines drift endlessly, catching

and killing hundreds of thousands more every year. According to another study, a detritus-filled part of the Pacific holds six pounds of floating trash for every pound of natural plankton.

In the Florida Keys and the Caribbean region, as much as 80 percent of the coral reefs are dead or in severe decline as high water temperatures bleach them. Excess CO₂ in the atmosphere leads to ocean acidification, which is already destroying the shells of sea snails and other tiny creatures near the base of the ocean’s food chain. When CO₂ in the atmosphere exceeds 560 parts per million—a level we are likely to reach by the end of the 21st century—all coral reefs, the incubators of life, will eventually disappear. Perhaps 70 percent of the oxygen on the planet comes from photosynthesis taking place in organisms in or near the few sunlight-rich feet of water at the ocean’s surface. The ocean supplies about two of every three breaths we take. What climate change will do to that oxygen production is ominous and uncertain.

Most of the big fish in the oceans are gone. “We have to stop killing fish” was the second thing Sylvia said to me. Populations

of larger predators like cod, marlin, halibut, and sharks are at less than 10 percent of their numbers from 70 years ago. We're now taking swordfish that have barely reached the breeding stage. "Eating these fish is like eating the last Bengal tigers," she says.

Her response to the plummeting fish numbers and to the crisis in general is to establish Hope Spots—protected places in the ocean where dumping, mining, drilling, fishing, and all other forms of exploitation are prohibited. She has picked out almost 60 places for this status, and she dreams of having 20 percent of the ocean fully protected by 2020. Right now about 2 percent has that protection. Her biggest single victory in this quest came in 2006, when she happened to sit at the same table with President George W. Bush at a White House dinner. As a result of their conversation, he created a 140,000-square-mile, fully protected marine national monument around the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Establishing many more Hope Spots is the principal goal of Sylvia's life.

And yet, somehow, there's also a sense that nobody is listening. Sometimes, Sylvia's sea blue eyes have the same gentle sorrow with which wise and kind aliens look at foolish earthlings in movies. "Many people I love have no idea of the trouble we're in," she says. When she started talking about the decline in fish populations, 25 years ago, the number of bluefin tuna remaining had fallen to about 10 percent of the total when the species was healthy. Today only about 3 percent of bluefin tuna remain. She keeps on telling us; we keep on not listening. She is like a bright red STOP VEHICLE IMMEDIATELY light that's been blinking on the dashboard for 25 years. But the car seems to keep going, so we keep on driving.

LAST APRIL, I saw Sylvia give a talk and a video presentation in Tampa. The event was in a historic-landmark theater with an old-fashioned marquee that puts performers' names in lights, and Sylvia's was on top, above that of her fellow speaker, a woman biologist known for her studies of the forest canopy. The audience, about three-quarters female, cheered when Sylvia took the stage

with her arms uplifted in a touchdown gesture. She wore black slacks, dark glasses (because of a flu-like case of "airport-itis," she said), and a dress jacket of aqua blue, her signature color.

"You can do it, too!" was the inspirational theme. Her often told autobiography rolled out: how she earned degrees in marine botany from Florida State University and Duke at a young age; how she went on a round-the-world oceanographic cruise in 1964 with 70 other scientists and crew members, all of them men; how she became a national celebrity in 1970 when she led a group of five women scientists in an experiment living in

a capsule underwater for two weeks on a coral reef; how she served as the first woman chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for 18 months in the early nineties but resigned because of her greater sympathy for fish than for the fishermen helped by the NOAA; how she founded companies to build mini submarines, one-to-five-person crafts that can descend hundreds of feet; how *Time* magazine named her a Hero for the Planet in 1998.

On the subject of saving fish from overfishing, she showed a frightening clip of herself in 2012

swimming next to a school of menhaden as it was being netted and sucked up into a factory ship for processing into omega-3 fish oil. The video bounces with the motion of the waves as crewmen in yellow slickers yell and wave frantically at this small, agile, determined, wetsuited woman to get out of the way. How she avoids being netted and inhaled into the maw herself is not clear. "When that school was captured, I felt as if a piece of me was ripped out of the ocean," she told the Tampa audience. They cheered her throughout and at the end of the evening rose as one in a standing ovation.

She then sat and signed copies of her latest book, *Blue Hope: Exploring and Caring for Earth's Magnificent Ocean*, for more than two hours. Such devotion of fans to their star, or vice versa, I had never seen. To some, Sylvia gave five or ten minutes, listening to their personal stories and posing with them for photographs. People said, "You have been my hero since I was a little girl!" and "I knew Dr. Harold Humm at Duke,

and he adored you!" Theater staff turned out some of the lights, and the signing progressed in the near dark until someone found a lamp. Each inscription received her careful attention. At the end of the line, an auburn-haired young woman waited patiently while the minutes and then hours went by. When her turn finally came, she crouched by the signing table. Leaning her face close to Sylvia's, she said, "I want to be you."

Sylvia smiled and said, "Just be yourself."

THE WORSENING emergency keeps Sylvia on the road for more than 300 days in a year. I felt lucky whenever she gave me an extra moment. Over the holidays, when she was taking a short travel break at her main residence in Oakland, California, I flew out there. This time we met in front of San Francisco's Aquarium of the Bay, where she had an appointment to talk to the director about his plans to add mini-submarine excursions for visitors. Sylvia brought an entourage—her daughter Liz Taylor, who now owns and runs Deep Ocean Engineering and Research (DOER), the mini-sub company Sylvia founded; Laura Cassiani, the COO of Sylvia's foundation, Mission Blue; Jane Kachmer, then Sylvia's publicist (and now the foundation's CEO); Colette Cutrone Bennett, then director of sponsorship for Rolex, which has backed some of Sylvia's enterprises and for which she has done ads; and Heather, whose last name I didn't catch, also with Rolex. Heather and Colette, both knockout blondes, had flown in from New York the evening before and were flying out that afternoon. Colette had sat next to Donald Trump at a recent equestrian event in Palm Beach and had talked business, and he gave her his phone number. She discovered that she had misplaced it, however.

As we entered the building, Sylvia saw, first off, an exhibit of a big cylindrical tank full of anchovies swimming around and around. It stopped her. She looked at it for a while, then shook her head. "No," she said. "This is not the way to see these animals. This makes them look like a mass. They are not only that—not just some endlessly abundant school. Each one of these fish is also its own individual being."

At a display about shark attacks, she frowned again. "Sharks do not attack people," she corrected, standing under a surfboard with a large bite out of it. "Sometimes, extremely rarely, they mistake a human for food. They're not these evil, malevolent creatures, although we like to think so, in order to thrill ourselves. If that description fits anybody it's us, when we hack the fins off the living animals for shark-fin soup

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EARTHLINGS
IN MOVIES.”

and then throw the mutilated sharks back in the water.”

She didn’t really perk up when the museum director led us through the clear glass tunnels that make visitors feel as if they are walking under the sea. But when he led us backstage and upstairs, onto catwalks atop the tanks through which the tunnels pass, she became absorbed in looking down at the fish, and she was no longer with the group when we emerged into the aquarium’s inner hallways. “Maybe she jumped in,” someone suggested, and when she caught up she said she had wanted to. During the meeting that followed, she returned to her basic mood of enthusiasm and optimism, bobbing back up like a cork with her touchdown gesture and saying “Yes!” That was her reaction when the director announced his plan to make the aquarium a “sub hub” for dozens of mini subs transporting “citizen scientists” and wealthy donors on research trips into San Francisco Bay.

Suddenly, she thanked everyone, and she and her entourage said goodbye and hurried off to cabs. Another meeting awaited—something about a conversation with the promoter who was bringing the next Super Bowl to San Francisco. I went back to the anchovy display and stared at it for a while. Although I tried to pick out individual anchovies and identify them the next time they came around, I could not say I succeeded. In fairness, one anchovy really does look a lot like another. But as I noticed this one flare its gills or that one rise to take something off the surface, maybe I got her point.

SYLVIA HAS BEEN married three times: to John Taylor, a zoologist; to Giles Mead, an ichthyologist; and to Graham Hawkes, an engineer. Reporters have always asked her more about her personal life than they would have asked a man in her position. During the early days of her fame, stories about her played up this angle and featured photos of her American-girl good looks and wide, gleaming smile.

She had a son and a daughter with her first husband, and a daughter with her second. With Hawkes, her third husband, she had no children, but together they founded two companies devoted to the design and building of mini submarines. In *Sea Change*, an autobiographical book published in 1996, she included a photograph of Hawkes wearing a tuxedo and piloting a mini sub. This was perhaps a reference to Hawkes’s role as a villain in the James Bond movie *For Your Eyes Only*, in which he fought and lost a submarine battle with Roger Moore’s Bond. Hawkes and Sylvia divorced in about 1990; she has said he was more interested

in treasure hunting than in science. (On her own she started DOER in 1992, and he is not involved with the company.)

In truth, Sylvia’s life is so wide-ranging and complicated—so oceanic—as to be a challenge to describe. The swerve she made into the mini-sub business puzzled many of her scientist colleagues. Liz Taylor, head of DOER, does not resemble the late movie star of the same name. This Liz has blond, wavy hair, incisive glasses, and an engineer’s calm, analytical poise. Two days after the aquarium visit, I was supposed to meet Sylvia at DOER’s headquarters in Alameda for a tour. When I arrived she wasn’t there, so Liz showed me around.

DOER’s factory, in a dockside hangar next to Alameda’s harbor, is big enough to hold a small ocean liner. Over the years, DOER has sold mini submarines to many customers in government, business, and science, and to several foreign navies. The factory resembles a deep box of giant Legos. Liz pointed out the six-foot-across bubbles of clear acrylic that the submariners sit in, and the subs’ many-hinged mechanical arms (in ads, these arms have had Rolex watches strapped to them), and the container-size support modules, and the smaller submersible robots that can work on offshore oil rigs and unclog municipal water tunnels. The pieces of equipment suspended here and there in the hangar’s twilight gave the high-walled space an undersea quality.

DOER’s most ambitious goal is to build three-person submersibles that can travel to any depth—all-access subs. One design would be able to descend quickly, the other more slowly. The research has been completed and the project is ready to go, but funding for a test model is not yet there. The key element of the design, a thick-walled, precision-crafted bubble made of glass rather than acrylic, costs too much for DOER to finance without help. (An estimated price for the two all-access subs is \$40 million.) Instead, the company is currently building a pair of subs for \$5 million that can go down to 3,300 feet. When an all-access sub finally is built and scientists can use it to travel the ocean anywhere from top to bottom, the discoveries may be exponentially greater than those made possible 70 years ago by the invention of scuba diving.

Sylvia says some things over and over.

When she showed up at DOER and we went to lunch, she repeated a few of them, such as how she persuaded a higher-up at Google to include the oceans in Google Earth’s picture of the globe by telling him that, without the oceans, Google Earth was only “Google Dirt.” Another standard: “Fish and lobsters and crabs and squid aren’t ‘seafood,’ they’re precious marine wildlife. A fish is much more valuable when it’s swimming in the ocean than when it’s swimming in butter and lemon slices on your plate.” At refrains like that, my mind wandered. *Mission Blue*, the movie about her, is mostly engaging, but less so during the parts where one of the codirectors injects himself into the story. Now I found I had some sympathy for this codirector. How does one respond to statements like “the ocean is dying”? The concept is

imponderable and upsetting, so of course our thoughts return to that familiar and fascinating subject, ourselves.

I remembered what New York City was like without power or services after Hurricane Sandy. I walked the beaches of Brooklyn and Staten Island and saw that the ocean had indeed gone insane. Houses near the shore were blown out from back to front, piles of sea wrack mounted three stories high, beads of styrofoam lay everywhere along miles of shoreline

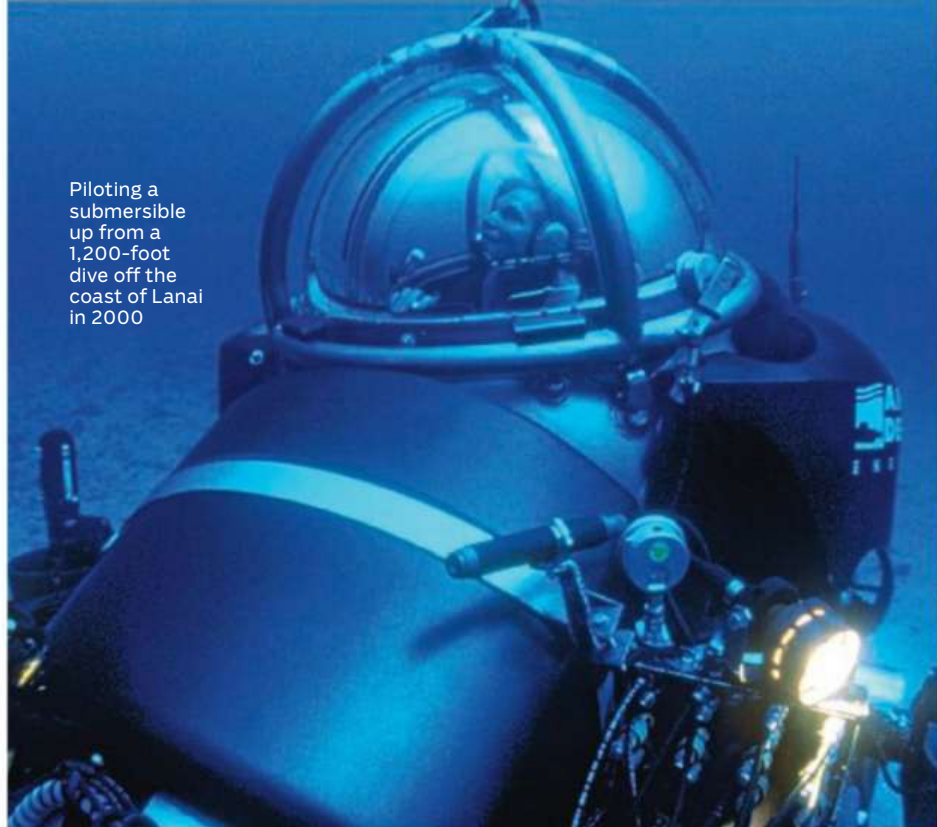
like an infinitude of dirty snow. Plastic drinking straws, red-and-white swizzle sticks, and brown Starbucks coffee stirrers had been woven into the chain-link fences of softball fields in a mega-profusion I could not have conceived of had I not seen it. The most disquieting aspect of the hurricane, though, was that it had no interest in the spiderweb-thin strands of my own life and concerns, or of anybody’s. Nothing in our cherished plans pertained to it. It spread its destruction, killed or didn’t kill, and never bothered about us.

Sylvia and I were supposed to talk more on the following day, but at the last minute a chance came up for her to fly to Chile, where she discussed with Chile’s president the possibility of creating a Hope Spot in the Pacific Ocean around Easter Island.

ALMOST HALF a century ago, before being on the world stage had crossed her mind, Sylvia made her reputation as a scientist with a now classic Ph.D. dissertation about marine algae (seaweed), entitled “Pha-

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I HAD MADE
THE MISTAKE
OF TELLING
SYLVIA THAT I
LIKED TO FISH.
“WHY DO YOU
ENJOY TOR-
TURING WILD-
LIFE?” SHE
ASKED ME.
”

Piloting a submersible up from a 1,200-foot dive off the coast of Lanai in 2000



eophyta of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico." Phaeophyta are the brown seaweeds. There are also green seaweeds and red seaweeds. By the time she was 30, Sylvia had learned more about the brown seaweeds of the Gulf than anyone had ever known. Doing all the collecting herself, without any grants or subsidies, and using scuba equipment, then still in its early stages as a research tool, she amassed specimens by the thousands. The eastern Gulf was her region of study, because she lived in the coastal town of Dunedin, near Tampa, as a girl and young woman. Of the tens of thousands of marine algae specimens she has collected in her life, about 20,000 are now in the botanical department of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Algae do not sound exciting and call to mind ponds or poorly tended swimming pools. In fact, algae are the principal flora of the oceans, the planet's workhorse photosynthesizers and oxygen producers. Under healthy conditions, algae species exist in rainforest-like abundance. They can be tiny single-cell organisms or 150-foot-long kelp; mostly they are hand size or smaller. *Prochlorococcus*, a single-cell blue-green alga, or cyanobacteria, that is perhaps the most abundant photosynthesizing organism on earth, produces an estimated 20 percent of the planet's oxygen supply. Sylvia's thorough catalog of phaeophyta showed what a thriving Gulf looked like. Pollution, oil spills, and dredging destroy algae, hurricanes rip them from their environments and kill them, and nitrate pollution from fertil-

izer runoff enhances the growth of certain algae at the drastic expense of others. Like everything else in the ocean, the seaweeds are under assault. In retrospect, Sylvia's study serves as an essential reference point for what the Gulf was like before late 20th-century development came along.

Her dissertation is also a work of art, as I discovered when I read it; excitement and romance infuse its scientific language in a hard-to-explain way. She did all the drawings herself. I asked her if sometime she would show me a few of her specimens at the Smithsonian, and one afternoon, when she happened to be in D.C., she met me there. If you've seen her before, as I had, it can be a surprise to remember that she's five feet, three inches tall and 80 years old; she appears to be simply herself, and not of any particular size or age. Her walk is easy and casual, as if she almost disdains to do it. The only time she moves like her real self is when she's swimming. With her that day was Robert Nixon, a producer and codirector of *Mission Blue*. (He's not the codirector who kept intruding in it.) As they came up the steps, they were talking about the mesh size of squid nets. She was saying to Nixon that the best size of mesh in squid nets is no nets at all.

Three scientists of the Smithsonian greeted us just inside: James Norris, David Ballantine, and Barrett Brooks, all of them experts in marine botany and equal in their awed deference toward Sylvia. She had set up the afternoon's viewing session with a phone call to Norris, a cheery man with

glasses and a neatly trimmed white beard. He said he had an exhibit he wanted her to see, and he led us to a display case. Pointing to a piece of coral covered with a reddish lichen-like growth, he said, triumphantly, "This is the deepest-dwelling alga ever found—278 meters!"

Sylvia cocked an eye at it and nodded in approval. "These deepwater photosynths are getting short shrift in our assessment of the O₂ productivity of the oceans," she said. "At this depth, it's photosynthesizing with one-tenth of one percent of the sunlight available at the surface. How can it live? We know almost nothing, really, about deeper-dwelling ocean life."

Through back hallways, we made our way to a cavernous inner room where elbow-high cases of flat drawers stretched into the distance. At a place where the fluorescent lights were brighter, tan paper folios had been laid out on the case tops. Sylvia opened the folios carefully, one by one. Here was an alga called *Avrainvillea sylvearleae*, unknown to botany until she discovered it on some rocks in two meters depth near Wilson's Pier off the town of Alligator Harbor, Florida. Here was *Padina profunda* Earle, found attached to limestone and fine shells in 60 meters depth 19 miles off Loggerhead Key in the Dry Tortugas. "In the water, it's a translucent alga, like glass," Sylvia remarked. Here was *Hummbrella hydra* Earle, found in 30 meters depth off Chile, which she named in punning tribute to her beloved mentor, marine botanist Harold Humm. "In their habitat, these branches look like pink umbrellas turned inside out," she said. "Very Dr. Seussian."

"They're all such beautiful specimens," Barrett Brooks said. "You dried and pressed all of them yourself, and you generally didn't use formalin."

"I never liked formalin. I mean, it's embalming fluid! Think of how much of that stuff I would have in my system by now!"

"It's great you didn't, because formalin scrambles DNA," he said. "If you had, we couldn't do DNA sequencing on your specimens."

As the folders opened, every specimen revealed a different structure—some broad-leaved and fan-like, some resembling stick insects or needlework sewn microscopically fine. She explained how an alga called *Phaeostroma pusillum*, which she found in the Gulf, constitutes probable evidence for the nonexistence of Florida during the high-water Pleistocene era, because the alga is also found in the Atlantic, from Georgia to Rhode Island. "To most people, all these beautiful plants would probably just be the gunk you pull off your boat propeller," she said.



Life under-
water during
Tekkite II

Tactfully, Nixon interrupted to say that they now had to rush to Sylvia's next appointment. Their schedule had got backed up because their previous meeting had gone on too long, Nixon said. It had been with the vice chairman of land and natural resources of Tanzania, who had talked at length to Sylvia about his country's problem of fishermen who fish with dynamite.

"That happened to me!" Norris said as he walked us out. He had been diving at about 30 feet, collecting algae off the southwestern coast of China, when a fisherman threw three sticks of dynamite into the water nearby. The explosion tore off all his scuba gear, crushed his chest, rearranged his internal organs, and blew out both his eardrums. He would have died if not for the extraordinary efforts of the U.S. Embassy, a British Petroleum helicopter, and a French diving physician who was in the area. After a few days in a hospital in Hong Kong he flew to Washington, where he spent more than a year in rehab. Eighteen months after having been dynamited, Norris was diving again.

Sylvia shook her head in sympathy. "Dynamite fishing is a real problem nowadays," she added. "When all the catchable fish are gone, people use dynamite to bring up any little ones who might be left." She and Nixon then said goodbye to the scientists and to me, hurried out the front entry, and caught a cab. The four of us, as if in her wake, stood in the lobby and talked about her. "What impressed people about Sylvia from the beginning was that she was a scientist, not a technician, making these dives," Norris said. "In the past, a lot of our ocean science had been like flying over the Ama-

zon in a plane looking out the window and not getting down on the ground. But Sylvia always pushed to go down and see what the heck was going on for herself.

"And she's sure not exaggerating the ocean's problems, I can tell you that."

SYLVIA IS FROM New Jersey originally. Her parents had a small farm near the Delaware River in the southern part of the state. Her father, Lewis Earle, an electrician who worked for DuPont, could build or repair anything. Sylvia gets her engineering skills from him. Her mother, Alice Richie Earle, loved the natural world and showed interest rather than alarm when Sylvia came

back from a nearby creek with animals she had found. Sylvia was the sixth of their seven children and the only girl. The couple lost their first four, all of them boys—two in infancy, another to an ear infection at the age of nine, and their oldest in a car accident. Such tragedies could have destroyed a marriage, but the Earles kept going.

The family moved to Dunedin in 1948, when Sylvia was 12. At that time the town was an undeveloped, almost frontier place. Their house had the Gulf of Mexico in its front yard. Sylvia first used scuba gear at the age of 17—Jacques Cousteau and Emile Gagnan had invented the equipment just ten years earlier. She went all over the Gulf, using her family's 18-foot outboard or hitching rides with shrimp boats or Navy divers, always in search of new seaweeds. She can describe vanished Florida in a way that makes you mourn—the inland freshwater spring lakes "as blue as morning glories," the reefs (now mostly dredged up along the urbanized coasts, and gone), the groupers that watched her work and got to know her and would have followed her up onto the shore if they could have. ("Almost all the groupers have disappeared. They were friendly and curious, like Labrador retrievers, and they also happened to be delicious.") She pronounces the complicated Gulf Coast names without a pause, from the Tortugas to Apalachee Bay, Pass-a-Grille Beach and Big Gasparilla Island,

and the Homosassa and Caloosahatchee and Apalachicola and Tombigbee and Pascagoula Rivers, and so on up to Grand Terre, Louisiana. The wider ocean she travels has its center in the Gulf and radiates outward from it.

The last house that Sylvia's parents lived in still belongs to her. It is in a once rural part of Dunedin, on wooded acres that include a lake. When the family moved there, in 1959, the area was mostly orange groves and wild land. By then Sylvia was living elsewhere, but she often returned while doing her algae study, and when she had children she brought them for vacations. The place is still a refuge for her. She told me she would be making another pause in her travels there in early May.

From the outside, the live oaks all around the gray one-story ranch house seem to be pressing it down to about half a story, but inside, the living room is ample and comfortable, with toy stuffed alligators on the couch and idyllic Florida landscapes on the walls. Sylvia led me through a door to the back and then along a narrow boardwalk to

I ASKED SYLVIA WHAT THE DEATH OF THE OCEAN WOULD LOOK LIKE. A REMOTE LOOK CAME OVER HER. "NO OCEAN, NO US," SHE SAID.

a lake that was so smooth and green with duckweed, it resembled the top of a pool table. We sat on a dock. Sylvia was wearing clamdiggers, though she would never dig a clam except for research. I creaked as I sat, but she moved without hitch or creak.

Her father had built the house; the dock and boardwalk were added later. She pointed out the cypress trees he had planted around the lake, which they now buttressed with their large knees. "This lake doesn't have a name," she said. "Maybe it's just Lake Earle. It used to be tannin colored and beautifully clear. There were bass and gar, and toads along the bank, and flying squirrels in the trees. I really miss the flying squirrels. Runoff from the surrounding development made the water murky and fed the duckweed."

We walked on the boardwalk through the trees as she pointed out other plantings and improvements her father had made. Her parents come up often in her conversation. She describes them as her "best friends" in the dedication to *Sea Change*. They were

devout Methodists and helped build a church in Dunedin, she told me. I asked her if she goes to church, and she said not really.

We got in her sea blue rented SUV and drove to the Gulf shore. A loud scraping kept coming from under the car. She said it must be a stick and it would fall off soon, but it didn't. When we got to a downtown parking lot, she jumped out, lay on the piping-hot pavement, and pulled out a good-size tree limb with green leaves still on it. After several stops in town, including at a fish store, where she looked with displeasure at the iced casualties for sale, we headed north along the coast. I had made the mistake of telling her that I liked to fish, and she kept asking me why. I said I just loved it because it's my bliss and I want to follow my bliss. That argument had no effect. "But why do you enjoy torturing wildlife? It's just a choice for you. It's life or death for them. Why not just observe them without torturing them?" I mumbled an answer about the thrill of the chase.

Her family's first house in Dunedin had been on Wilson Street. She took us there and pulled over where the street now ends, at a gate you need a card with a magnetic stripe to open. As we peered beyond the gate, high-rise buildings dwindled to a perspective point where a small square of blue Gulf peeked through. A sign offered three-bedroom condos starting at \$780,000. "You know that the misconception that fish can't feel pain has been completely disproven, don't you?" she asked. I said yes, I had seen studies in which fish jaws were injected with bee venom and the fish showed pain. I said I knew hooks hurt, having sometimes hooked myself.

Searching for a stretch of original shoreline, she continued out of town, across a causeway, and down a one-lane road to Honeymoon Island State Park. Here the shore was undisturbed and thick with mangroves. We got out and walked along a sandy trail through stands of palmettos, cabbage palms, slash pines, and live oaks. "This is what the open country around Dunedin used to be," she said. An osprey hovered overhead, sunlight coming through the edges of its wings, and she took pictures of it with the camera she had brought.

At an opening in the mangroves, we came upon a small bite of sand beach—finally, the actual Gulf. A widescreen vista opened out. Turquoise shallows marked by brown patches of turtle grass darkened to a deeper blue distance where stacks of white clouds piled up. In the light breeze, the waves did not break but slapped. Striped mullet jumped. We took off our shoes and waded in. Among the prop roots of the red man-

groves, a large troupe of fiddler crabs were doing a back step that mimed getting away from us as fast as possible, each crab with one claw raised. At the tide line, Sylvia found tiny pointed periwinkle-like shells, and black snails, and an epiphytic alga that grows mostly on spartina grass, and a marine gnat smaller than this semicolon; we watched it navigate the varicolored grains of sand.

I asked her what the death of the ocean would look like. A remote look came over her. She described gray-green dead zones like the one that exists already in the Gulf off New Orleans, and the disappearance of certain organisms and the rise of others we may not even know of yet, and coastal sterility, and a lack of coral reefs. Some animals, like horseshoe crabs, have survived acidic oceans before, and might again, she said. About soft-bodied animals like jellyfish we don't have enough fossil records to say for sure, but jellyfish are doing OK so far and might do even better in a mostly dead ocean. New Ebola-like microbes might emerge. The planet's oxygen densities might go down and the air become too rarefied in higher places for them to be habitable. Her voice trailed off. She said, "As a species we depend upon the ocean, so the eventual result would be the same. No ocean, no us."

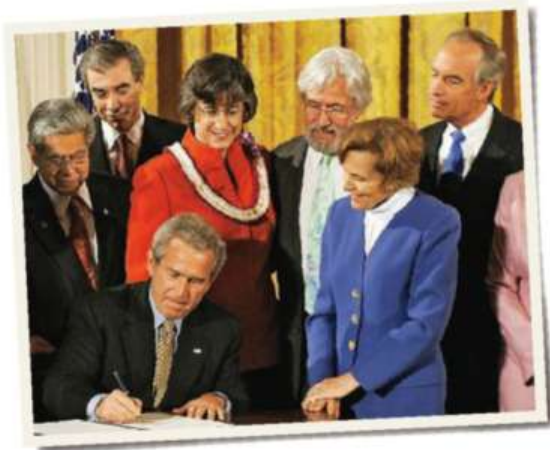
PEOPLE OFTEN ask Sylvia what they can do. Her focus is not on heading up popular movements—she isn't organizing beach cleanups or fish-market boycotts. She tries to reach the elites. At the end of her TED Talk in 2009, she told the technology, entertainment, and design invitees in attendance: "I wish you would use all means at your disposal—films! expeditions! the Web! new submarines!—and campaign to ignite public support for a global network of marine protected areas, Hope Spots large enough to save and restore the ocean, the blue heart of the planet."

Her foundation, Mission Blue, has identified 58 Hope Spots around the world, from the Outer Seychelles, off southeast Africa, to the East Antarctic Peninsula, to Micronesia, to the Bering Sea Deep Canyons, the Gulf of California, the Patagonian Shelf, the Sargasso Sea, the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, Ascension Island, and the Gulf of Guinea, off the west coast of Africa. Questions about what any particular Hope

Spot's protected status would consist of, or how it would be enforced, often remain unexplained. So far, some marine protected areas have had success. Cabo Pulmo Marine Park, a protected area in Mexico's Baja peninsula, has seen an almost fivefold increase in its biomass since it was created in 1995, and a tenfold increase in big fish. (Sylvia loves Cabo Pulmo and says it's one of her favorite places to dive.)

Any notion that a Hope Spot's purpose is to grow fish for people to catch makes her mad. The sanctuaries are to be places set apart in perpetuity where the ocean can recover, not nurseries for Mrs. Paul's. I once asked her what was the point of creating Hope Spots if the whole ocean will continue to acidify from excess CO₂ anyway. She said that the more sanctuaries there are, and the larger amount of ocean they cover, the better the chances for the ocean's resilience, when and if CO₂ is under control.

To an extent, her strategy of persuading the elites has worked. People like Gordon Moore of Intel have given a lot of money to saving the ocean, and George W. Bush, when nudged by Sylvia, created the national monument around Hawaii. Bush's executive act provided a precedent for Barack Obama, who last year expanded the protected area of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument to 490,000 square miles, establishing the largest protected marine network so far. Sylvia says we live



President George W. Bush establishing the 140,000-square-mile Northwestern Hawaiian Islands National Monument, which Earle inspired him to create, in June 2006

in the perfect time to make changes that will benefit the planet for thousands of years. A recent idea, the creation of marine protected areas in the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, which by international treaty extends from the **continued on page 110**

Freedom Season

It's cool out, not cold—which makes it the best time of year for impromptu adventures in layers that smoothly transition from street to trail

C

D

A

B

E

F

H

G

PORTLAND'S OLDER-BROTHER HAND-DYES ITS ORGANIC-COTTON AND PLANT-BASED SYNTHETIC CLOTHING WITH NONTOXIC COLORS.

- A. Mike Suede sneakers by Saturdays NYC (\$150; saturdaysnyc.com)
- B. Boucle Tipped socks by Saturdays NYC (\$12; saturdaysnyc.com)
- C. 501 jeans by Levi's (\$68; levi.com)
- D. Raglan fleece by Olderbrother (\$185; olderbrother.us)
- E. FW01 NATO watch by Electric (\$175; electriccalifornia.com)
- F. Texture scarf by Saturdays NYC (\$85; saturdaysnyc.com)
- G. Råven jacket by Fjällräven (\$250; fjallraven.com)
- H. Alpine Crew sweater by Aether (\$250; aetherapparel.com)

THE RÅVEN JACKET FROM SWEDISH COMPANY FJÄLLRÅVEN COMES WITH A HIDDEN HOOD TUCKED UNDER THE COLLAR.



THIS LAID-BACK
BUTTON-UP
(AND BOTH HATS
ON THIS PAGE)
COMES FROM OUR
NEW FAVORITE
SURF BRAND,
MOLLUSK, BASED
IN CALIFORNIA.

CANADIAN
COMPANY
ROOTS, WHICH
MAKES THIS
LEATHER
BAG, HAS
OUTFITTED
NUMEROUS
OLYMPIC
TEAMS.

ARCADE'S BELTS
ARE STRETCHY AND
ADJUSTABLE, SO YOU
CAN WEAR THEM
WITH BAGGY SKI
PANTS OR SKINNY
JEANS.

- I. One Pocket shirt by Mollusk (\$110; mollusksurfshop.com)
- J. Modern Satchel bag by Roots (\$428; roots.com)
- K. Workwear shirt by Patagonia (\$99; patagonia.com)
- L. Pelican Patch hat by Mollusk (\$35; mollusksurfshop.com)
- M. Winston dog leash by Schoolhouse Electric and Supply Co. (\$74; schoolhouseelectric.com)
- N. Contrast sweater by Marine Layer (\$125; marinelayer.com)
- O. Hudson belt by Arcade Belt Co. (\$28; arcadebelts.com)
- P. Lineman boots by Timberland (\$475; timberland.com)
- Q. Fausto socks by This Is Cambridge (\$21; this-is-cambridge.com)
- R. Cooper Selvedge Denim jeans by Frank and Oak (\$125; frankandoak.com)
- S. Fjord beanie by Mollusk (\$50; mollusksurfshop.com)

style

WANTED

Skin It to Win It

WHAT GOES UP FAST
COMES DOWN HAPPY

by Gordy Megroz

IF YOU'RE like me, skinning up mountains is nothing more than a necessary annoyance when accessing back- or sidecountry powder stashes. But last winter, I started using a climbing skin that made going up almost pleasurable.

While standard skins mimic seal fur—smooth when you slide forward, grippy when you pull your ski against the snow—the Fischer Profoil takes the fish-scale design that has been used on no-wax cross-country skis for decades and adapts it to alpine skins. The scaly surface offers far smoother glide and comparable bite on all kinds of snow, from icy hardpack to powder.

Unlike faux-fur skins, the waterproof plastic won't absorb moisture and get heavier as you go. With the Profoils, I climbed faster and was less fatigued at the top. Which meant that I had more energy for fresh turns—and more time and mojo at the bottom for another lap. \$275; fischersports.com

See page 107
for everything
else you need to
earn your turns.



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ESSENTIALS

11.15

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Quiver Killers

THE BIG TAKEAWAY FROM OUR ANNUAL SKI TEST IN SNOWBIRD, UTAH? VERSATILITY NOW REIGNS SUPREME.

by Marc Peruzzi

Kastle FX95 HP \$1,199

BEST FOR: Doing it all.

THE TEST: Two sheets of titanium alloy, a silver fir core, and the fastest graphite base that money can buy are all Kastle FX staples. This is, after all, the premium brand on the market. But the FX95 HP earned the Gear of the Year award in our winter Buyer's Guide for more than its pedigree; it won because Kastle overhauled its already great camber and profile. The tapered tip and tail, paired with just the right amount of rocker, make for a loose, surfy feel on soft snow without sacrificing edge hold on hardpack. It's plenty wide for most powder days—but a touch of camber means you can rail groomer turns all day, too.

THE VERDICT: "Scalpel-like precision on wind-scoured hardpack, but handled 24 inches of settled powder just fine," reported one tester. 126/95/115; kastle-ski.com

Nordica NRGy 90 \$699

BEST FOR: Everyday Vermont.

THE TEST: In the bigger sizes (177 centimeters and up), the NRGy 90 arcs a smooth, round 21.5-meter GS turn with very little effort. And that same big turn geometry makes it sure-footed in soft snow on open terrain. Testers praised the strong tail for stability at top speeds, though some found it tough to bend into smaller turns while going slower. Still, the full wood core backed by a milled-out titanium torsion bridge keeps it smooth for cruising.

THE VERDICT: Bigger skiers who fly on trails, start here. "Not for the hip-pivot crowd," said one tester. "You need to know how to set an edge and follow through." 126/90/110; nordicausa.com

Fischer Motive 86 Ti \$749

BEST FOR: Linking carved turns.

THE TEST: Over in Europe, the Motive 86 would be considered a fat ski. Stateside, it's an all-mountain carver for technical skiers who love banking medium turns in the fall line but don't want to swap skis if it snows six inches. We judged it to be one of the top skis in the test for autopilot-easy instructor turns. But tip rocker and ample girth let you dump speed and butter the Motive at will. Part of the credit for that loose feel also rests with Fischer's AirTec construction (the wood core is milled out in an offset pattern along the length), which shaves weight without killing power.

THE VERDICT: Race performance that intermediate skiers will love. 128/86/116; fischer sports.com

Völkl RTM 84 UVO \$1,150

BEST FOR: Carving bulletproof ice or fluffy corduroy.

THE TEST: At first glance, the brand-new RTM 84 looks about as forgiving as an illegal racing ski, with an aggressive 3-D milled core, an extra-wide binding platform for maximum edge grip, and a UVO vibration dampener on the shovel to absorb high-speed chatter. As expected, it ate up hardpack and gave us plenty of confidence hanging out big turns. But with an 84-millimeter waist, it's actually quite fat for a front-side ski, offering a nicely stable platform. Generous rocker at the tip and tail allow you to enter and exit turns with ease.

THE VERDICT: Rips as hard as anything we tested on packed snow, but floats in buckle-deep mush, too. "The perfect ski-coach or instructor ski," said one tester, who actually is a ski coach. 131/84/112; volkl.com

Elan Spectrum 95
Carbon \$775

BEST FOR: Easy cruising out West.

THE TEST: The bane of most improving skiers? Catching an outside edge. Rockered tips help, but the trade-off is losing edge contact in a turn. Elan's solution is asymmetrical Amphibio construction. Instead of two identical skis, the Amphibios have dedicated left and right sticks. The inside edge runs the full length, while the outside tip and tail edges are rockered up. Our testers found the Spectrum 95 the loosest and easiest-turning ski in the test. It laid down a nice medium-radius carve on soft groomers, but the light carbon tubes in the wood core made it a hair nervous at top speeds.

THE VERDICT: Light, responsive, and energetic. The leader of the pack for ease of use. 136/95/111; elanskis.com

Armada Invictus 108Ti \$875

BEST FOR: Deep snow.

THE TEST: Powder skis used to be scary on hardpack: too much rocker and a lack of internal fortitude made them annoyingly skittish. Not so the latest all-mountain versions, which blend rocker with underfoot camber and gutsy in-nards of wood and metal. The Invictus 108Ti features more extended sidecut than most of Armada's offerings, as well as two full sheets of aluminum alloy to dampen and energize the ride. It proved smooth and maneuverable—especially for skiers who weigh under 175 pounds. (The shovel might be a bit too soft for large folks.)

THE VERDICT: An everyday ski with effortless smearability for big, snowy mountains like Jackson and Revelstoke. 138/108/128; armadaskis.com

Rossignol Super 7 \$850

BEST FOR: Surfing and slashing untracked powder.

THE TEST: There's a reason you see a lot of Super 7's in Western tramlines: it's still the most user-friendly, effortless, fun powder ski ever made. It features Rossignol's heralded Air Tip honeycomb up front and out back to cut weight, and tip taper and ample rocker let it float in crust, crud, and fluff. But unlike many a lightweight powder ski, it doesn't chatter at speed, and you can even arc it into mellow groomer turns on demand.

THE VERDICT: "Inspires confidence on the deepest days," said one tester. "You can trust the stability." 140/116/130; rossignol.com

Nordica Patron \$849

BEST FOR: Going full tilt in the back bowls.

THE TEST: Some pure powder skis are designed for surfing around in the trees; others are built to go fast in open country. The Patron is the latter. It's by no means difficult to turn, but carbon-fiber reinforcements, a beefy wood core, and a powerful tail make for consistent rocketing in untracked snow on cut trails, treeless faces, and sweeping bowls. "It's playful and light, but you can't overski it at high speeds," said a tester. The downside? While the tail boosts directional stability, it can require a little bit of muscling at slow speeds in tight spots.

THE VERDICT: The fattest ski you'll ever need. 143/113/132; nordicausa.com



All-Access Passes

FOUR GO-ANYWHERE DECKS FROM OUR SNOWBOARD TEST IN CRESTED BUTTE, COLORADO

by Adam Broderick

Head Disrupt \$379

BEST FOR: All-terrain freestyle.

THE TEST: Head has been stepping up its snowboard game, and the Disrupt is direct proof. The twin-tip shape and Head's zero-camber Flocka profile simplify switch stance for riding all over the mountain. "Lightweight and full of life, with great pop and soft tip-to-tail flex," said one tester. It floats better than a traditionally cambered board and provides better edge hold than a rockered one, though a few testers wanted more stiffness on steep, technical terrain.

THE VERDICT: A playful all-mountain board for big air and smooth turns. ridehead.com

Never Summer Swift \$590

BEST FOR: Powder gliding.

THE TEST: The Swift's rocker-camber profile (rocker between the feet, camber underfoot extending toward the tips) provides an extra-long transition zone up front. That, plus the four-inch setback on the binding location and a wide nose, improves weight distribution for ideal float on big snow days. But the Swift proved fast and light in all conditions, thanks to the porous, fused-pellet base and blended light-hardwood core. One tester commented that the "torsional flexibility allowed for beautiful carves," and the "camber helped lock the edges into steep terrain."

THE VERDICT: A most-of-the-mountain dominator that excels in deep snow. neversummer.com

Winterstick

Seth Wescott \$750

BEST FOR: Big-mountain charging.

THE TEST: Wescott, a boarder-cross champion and co-owner of Winterstick, wanted something that catered to his aggressive style. This is the result. "Definitely a board for powerful riders," said one of our testers. The wide, rockered nose adds buoyancy, and the short, round tail enables quick turns. The tight side-cut made initiating edges easy, and the medium-to-stiff flex and tapered shape add control on groomers and off-piste slopes. Testers agreed that the light, strong aspen core made it playful and responsive.

THE VERDICT: Surfs with style. winterstick.com

Burton Custom Split \$750

BEST FOR: Backcountry freeriding.

THE TEST: After two decades in the Burton lineup, the Custom now comes as a splitboard. Like the solid model, it's a directional twin tip with a rockered nose and tail. But the Split adds traditional camber between the inserts and thin flat zones just outside them to help smooth out edge-to-edge transitions. Testers praised the board's all-mountain capabilities, noting impressive stability on uneven terrain. "Easy to control and playful," said one, while another called it "stout and supportive on steep slopes and over choppy snow."

THE VERDICT: Hits the sweet spot between flex and support. burton.com



On the Rise

TOURING CANDY TO
SWEETEN YOUR KIT
by Grayson Schaffer

IN-BOUNDS touring—in which skiers ditch the lifts and slap on climbing skins, like the Fischer Profloils on page 102, to get up the mountain—is catching on everywhere. It helps that most resorts keep access free and encourage the fun.



Dynafit's Radical 2.0 FT bindings (\$649; dynafit.com) boast rotating toe plates that let boots release from the front—helpful in a cartwheeling fall.

(1) **Dragon's frameless NFX2 goggles** (\$180; dragonalliance.com) provide a huge field of vision, and two side levers allow for quick switches among the 20 lens options. (2) **The North Face Summit L5 shell** (\$600; thenorthface.com) is tailored mostly from a single piece of DryVent fabric for a trim fit with a minimum of seams. Hem cinching at the waist keeps it from riding. (3) **Blizzard carbon-fiber Zero G 108 skis** (\$960; 136/108/122; blizzardsportusa.com) are light enough (3.6 pounds) for all-day uphill duty, yet the sidewall construction and paulownia core lend them power to carve trenches on hardpack. (4) **Dalbello's Sherpa T.I.D. boots** (\$850; dalbello.it) have a two-piece tongue for more range of motion. At 8.4 pounds, they're a great everyday option and sacrifice little on the descent. (5) **POC's Fornix helmet** (\$160; pocsports.com) tips the scale at under a pound, but its layout of aramid fibers (think Kevlar) meets alpine ski-safety standards. (6) **Backcountry Access Scepter 7075 Aluminum poles** (\$80; backcountryaccess.com) add built-in ice scrapers to already bombproof adjustable sticks. (7) **SmartWool's PhD Ultra Light Long Sleeve base layer** (\$80; smartwool.com) blends polyester and merino to resist pilling and funk. For maximum breathability, (8) **Eddie Bauer's Hangfire Pro Hooded jacket** (\$129; eddiebauer.com) pairs Polartec Power Dry panels under the arms with a polyester-spandex outer.

Fraser River delta, where the water gets shallow, kicking up dangerous waves.

McCormack tries flanking their bow with paddles in order to help them turn. But the foiling boat has too much sail up; attempting to reef it in these conditions, or even for the guys to switch positions on the boat, would cause them to capsize. They try to have normal conversations in order to stay calm: Do you want kids? How did it go with the mouse-dissecting neuroscientist? Then a massive wave washes over them.

When they're about a mile offshore, Corbett says, "I think we gotta face the music." He has been fighting in a blender for nine hours. McCormack argues briefly, but at around 3 A.M. they radio the Canadian coast guard. Soon a hovercraft crashes up through the waves and the guys scramble aboard. Their boat is later found floating hulls up somewhere near the town of Richmond, British Columbia.

"If you're going to wreck," George will later say, with a hint of something like pride in his voice, "you want to do it with a bit of style."

AS THE WINDS continue to roar, Mann spends three days making slow progress through the Gulf Islands, well behind the leaders of the fleet, before poking out into the Strait of Georgia. He pulls into Campbell River on Wednesday afternoon, ties up to a pier, and walks to a McDonald's, where he consumes four consecutive Big Macs. Then he falls asleep in a laundromat while drying his clothes. At 11 P.M., he makes the curious decision to catch the next tide through Seymour Narrows, which arrives at 1 A.M. "I'm in a race," he will later explain. "The night doesn't scare me so much."

In three hours, he's heading into a 20-knot northerly under a full moon. The tide is at his back; the waves are steep, eight feet high and three seconds apart. Whirlpools swirl. He dives into a trough, and before he can look up a wall of ocean falls on his head, driving him off his boat into the dark, frigid water. He's tethered to his cockpit with a surfboard-style leash, and he pulls himself back in. High basalt walls loom on either side of the narrows, offering no place to land. He eventually emerges at a little bay, drops anchor, and sleeps for six hours.

Early the next morning, he heads into a thrashing Johnstone Strait. The water fills his boat, drowning his electronic chart plotter and his GPS device and forcing him to resort to paper charts. He begins to shiver almost constantly. He camps on a beach but misjudges the tide and wakes up when a wave washes him off the logs he's sleeping on. He starts to feel the cold in his eyeballs.

On the water again, he's spotted by Team UnCruise, an Alaskan sailor competing, along with his daughter and her boyfriend, on a trimaran. They give him a hot meal. Mann emerges into Queen Charlotte Sound invigorated. "I came out with a whole new perspective after five days straight of kicks in the head," he says later. "I thought, It's all got to get better, because it's not going to get any worse."

The next evening, Mann spies a beautiful beach near Cape Caution and makes for it, envisioning a campfire. But the waves pitch-pole him stern over bow into the surf. His mast hits the shallow seafloor, and another wave buries him. His drysuit is open at the zipper—a grave error committed in the name of convenience—and seawater encases his legs like icy concrete. He drags his boat onto shore by his arms, reaches into his life vest, grabs a knife, and slices open his drysuit. Eighty pounds of Pacific Ocean pour out. He strips down and starts a fire.

Mann spends the night retrieving what he can from the beach. A few essential items don't wash up, including his anchor and his desalinator. The next morning, he shoves off again in his spare drysuit and runs into Team Blackfish, a three-man crew on a sleek catamaran whose captain forces Roger to spend the day on board drinking tea.

Over the next week, Mann loses track of the days. Hallucinations set in—trees, mostly, but also a barrel of laughing monkeys and a supermarket full of Mountain Dew. He ties up to a kelp bed, gets lost in the fog. He gets washed off logs again while sleeping. Mosquitoes swarm him. Dahl porpoises circle his boat. He figures he loses 20 pounds. It is an awful, beautiful experience.

On Saturday, June 20, two weeks after leaving Victoria, he pulls around the bow of an immense Disney cruise ship in Ketchikan. He spots a small dock with about 15 people on it. One of them is a customs official, waiting to find out if he's bringing any dairy products into the United States. Another is a race fan in a kilt who says that the Iditarod has nothing on this and offers Mann fish and chips. He devours the food with difficulty, since his fingers are the size of sausages. In a flat voice he says, "I came through a lot of stuff. Everything hurts but your heart and your soul. It's good to go. It's intact. You're like, OK. I got this." He pauses. "And then you get kicked in the head again."

He flies home the next day and leaves his boat at the dock. He says it's a gift for Jake Beattie.

TEAM ELSIE PIDDOCK wins the Race to Alaska in just five days, at one point flying 120 miles in a single tack. When they reach

the pier in Ketchikan, on Friday, June 12, about 40 fans and a handful of local reporters are waiting. So is Beattie, with the cash nailed to a piece of wood.

Another sleek trimaran crewed by Team MOB (Mail Order Bride) Mentality comes in second on Monday, June 15. Team Por Favor, in a 33-foot sloop monohull, is so close behind that MOB Mentality splits the steak knives with them. The Burd brothers take fourth place.

Fifteen teams finish the race. Legends begin to circulate among boat enthusiasts. The *Elsie Piddock* cost a million dollars (false). A freighter smashed a vessel on the opening crossing (also false). Multiple teams took extended pauses before reentering U.S. waters to polish off their marijuana stores (unverifiable).

The teams trickle into Ketchikan throughout June. One young man in a classic monohull pulls up to the dock in the early-morning hours of June 20, sees a few cameras, and declares he is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. On June 26, a 71-year-old arrives with his 26-year-old first mate, having spent the morning jury-rigging their broken rudder. He steps ashore and says simply, "I do this stuff."

Team Sea Runner bows out north of Johnstone Strait after two weeks, one dismasting, and more than one verbal sparring match. They come back a few weeks later to retrieve their humbled craft and tow it to Veirs's Seattle garage.

On June 29, Beattie sits in a café in Ketchikan, eating scallops and thinking about the future. Nearly nine million people have visited the race tracker. Some were inspired to chase down their favorite teams along the way to offer up high-calorie gifts: canned venison, beer, a tub of ice cream for Roger Mann. Beattie has fielded calls from reality-TV producers and potential big-dollar sponsors. That might be a good thing. It might not.

Now, though, only three vessels are still out there. Beattie checks the race tracker on his iPhone and gets up suddenly. One of the boats is coming in. He runs over a bridge and across a parking lot, making for the pier. Slowly at first, then faster, trying to reach the dock before the racers arrive. They're rowing a beautiful little monohull that they salvaged out of a blackberry bush. It's the kind of boat this race was made for. Beattie tears down the streets in a dead sprint. He arrives just in time to see a haggard man hop out of the craft and scream, "I truly think everyone should do this!"

O

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR ABE STREEP (@ABESTREEP) WROTE ABOUT GREEN-PEACE INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR KUMI NAIDOO IN APRIL.

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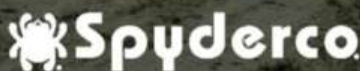


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EARLE **continued from page 99**

shoreline of every maritime country, increases her optimism. Most fishing is done within three miles of land, so inshore protected areas (Cabo Pulmo is one example) could have a sizable effect on fish numbers.

But if you don't expect to hang out with the president, make a film, or build a mini submarine, what can you do yourself? When I sent an e-mail to Sylvia asking her advice for ordinary people, she didn't answer, but eventually Liz Taylor did. Her list of recommendations included avoiding plastic drinking straws—a good idea, given what I saw after Sandy—bringing your own plate, cup, and utensils to summer barbecues, volunteering at your local aquarium, keeping an eye on changes along the shoreline, helping your state fish and wildlife officers, getting your omega-3's from algae-based products rather than from fish or krill oil, donating money to environmental groups that educate kids, and stopping the use of lawn chemicals like Roundup weed killer.

Sylvia is a one-in-seven-billion individual, and she encourages other individuals to do what they love and care about the oceans. Collectivity does not seem to be in her nature. But for the ocean to be saved, it seems to me that an enormous, widespread popular movement must rise up someday. In that sense, when Sylvia tells the TED folks to "ignite popular support," she is handing off the hardest part of the job. People can be induced to care about lovable, wide-eyed animals like seals, or to donate to dolphin rescue, or to visit and buy souvenirs at places that rehabilitate stranded sea otters and turtles. But getting across the real, immense, nonspecific, unsexy fact of the ocean's impending death in such a way that billions of people will care and want to do something about it is a problem nobody yet has solved.

Sylvia has not persuaded me to stop fishing, but I have decided to use only fly-fishing equipment from now on. And since I met Sylvia, I have eaten almost no fish. The sight of sushi now embarrasses me. It is likely that big fish like swordfish, tuna, cod, and grouper will soon disappear from the sea, or from our diets, or both. We might as well completely stop eating those fish now.

DRIVING AGAIN in Sylvia's sea blue SUV, we went up to Tarpon Springs to see the old sponge-boat docks. She said they looked picturesque, but in the old days, when there were actual sponges drying all over the place, the smell was unbearable. By now the afternoon had moved into rush hour. She was still thinking about my fishing and asked me how hooking an animal in the mouth and watching its desperate struggles could possibly be

enjoyable. I explained about the relatively non-injurious aspects of fly-fishing, how it uses only a single hook, etc. She asked why I didn't quit fishing entirely if I wanted to do less damage to the fish. Approaching Dunedin, we turned off the highway and onto a back road. She said, "Now I want to show you my parents' church." When I didn't answer, because I was still thinking of an answer to her previous question, she said, "Well, I'm going to show you the church whether you're interested or not."

She had told me that, in addition to the cypresses by their lake, her father had planted trees around their church. I had pictured a little border of trees around a church lawn. We turned from the back road onto a winding drive. This was no patch of lawn but a spacious green expanse, like an old-time camp meeting grounds. I am a lover of frontier American churches, and her parents' Methodist church was one of them, in 1950s style. The modernist, almost cubist angles of the church's walls and roof and entryway showed ingenious architecture combined with heartfelt pioneer-handyman carpentry. The trees she had known as saplings now stood in tall columns, with mote-filled shafts of late-afternoon sunlight slanting through the leaves.

We sat awhile with the engine off. "This is actually the second time I've been here today," she said. "I was here this morning. I come here every time I'm in Dunedin. This was where the branch got stuck under the car."

The church and grounds were like a place in a dream. The light through the leaves matched the sunlight that descends through coral reefs—those celestial shafts that light up the bright reef fish swimming through. As Americans we have an attachment to the Good Place, the Peaceable Kingdom. Hope Spots might be the latest, trans-global, trans-oceanic expression of that vision. Once you've glimpsed such a place for even an instant, you'll pursue it for the rest of your life. **O**

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AND REPORTING.

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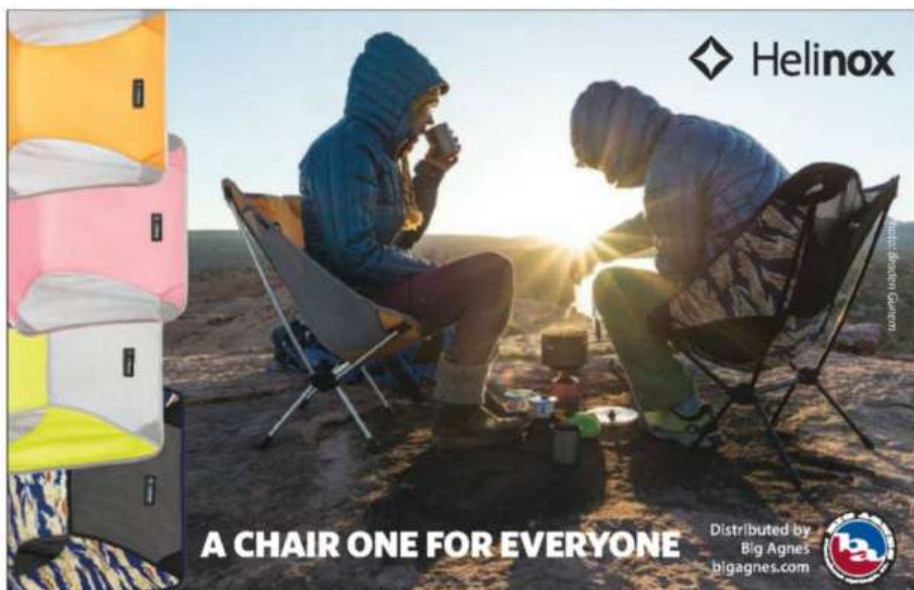
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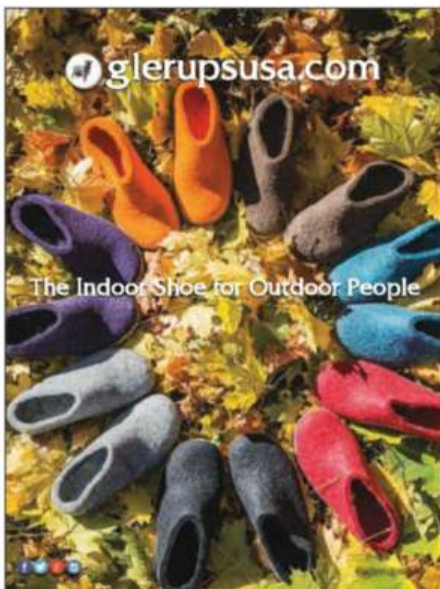


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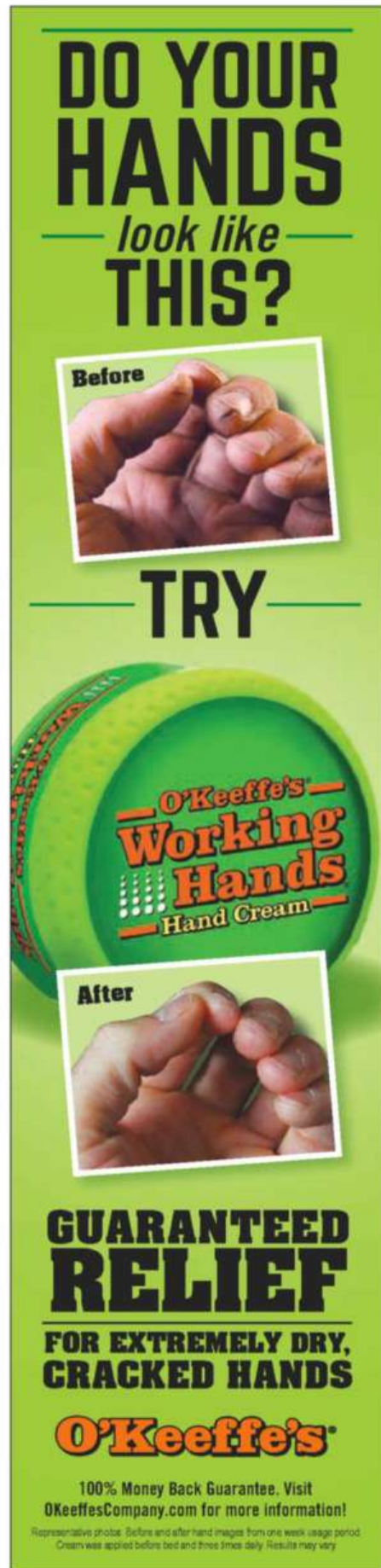
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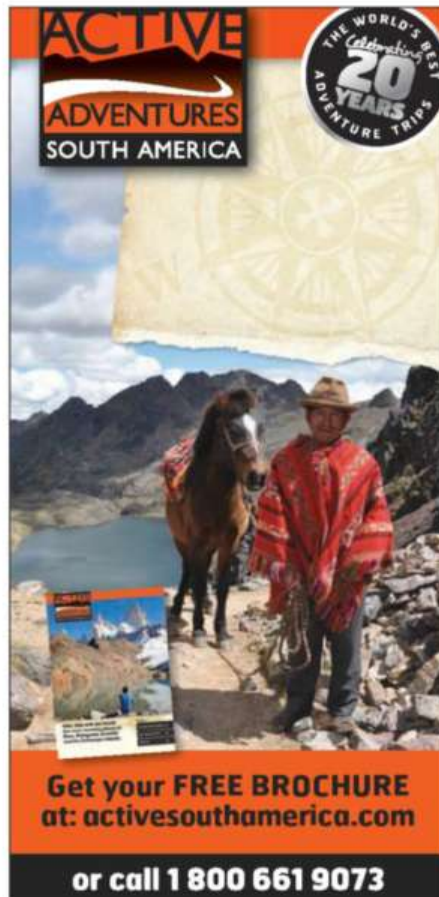


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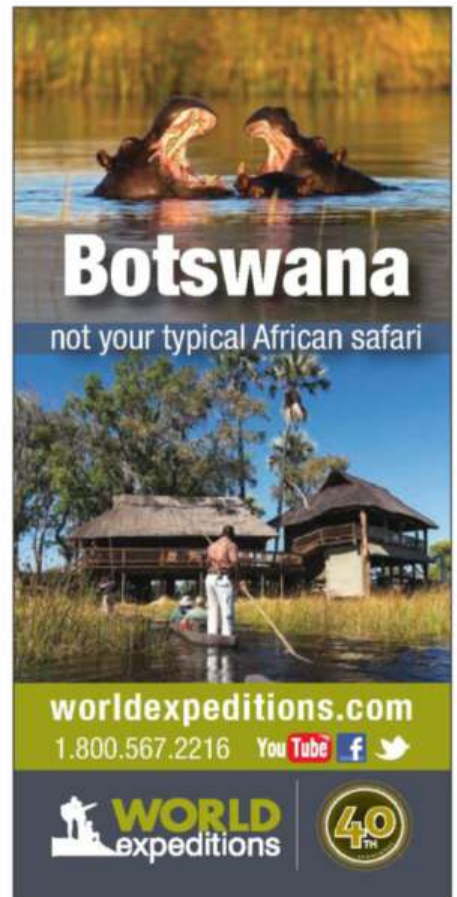
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